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VOL. LII.

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD,

BY GOLDSMITH.

A SIMPLE STORY.

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

THE
VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

5177

A TALE.

BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH, M.D.

Sperete miseri, cavete felices.



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MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

THE name of Goldsmith holds an enviable position in the annals of English literature. The versatility of his genius, his elegant taste, and the benevolence of his disposition, carried him with an easy flight over wide and varied provinces of study, and enabled him to bestow a grace on whatever he touched, which renders his writings as delightful as they are discursive.

This eminent man was born, November 29th, 1728, at Palice, otherwise Pallas, in the parish of Farney, county Longford in Ireland. His father was a clergyman of the church of England, whose virtues and poverty are said to be described with equal truth in the exquisite picture of the country parson in the *Deserted Village*. The fortunes of this amiable man, who had a wife and seven children to support out of his miserable pittance, were subsequently improved by the grant of a living, which was given him, in the county of Roscommon; but he died too early to see his children provided for, and our poet was left to the sole care of his mother. One of those minute circumstances, which add so much interest to biography, and for which the public is indebted to the Rev. John Graham, of Lifford, throws great light upon the situation of the widow, and her humble mode of living. According to that gentleman, the shop-book of a little grocer in the town of Ballymahon, has the name of Mrs. Goldsmith in many of its columns; trifling purchases, it farther appears, having been generally made through the medium of her son Oliver, then about eleven or twelve years old.

Soon after this period, however, the original cast of Oliver's mind attracted the attention of his relative, the Rev. Thomas Contarine: and, through the kindness of that gentleman, he was sent from Ballymahon, where he had spent most of his time in playing the flute, and rambling on the banks of the Inny, to a classical seminary at Edgeworth's-town, whence, in June 1744, he proceeded to Dublin, and was entered at Trinity College as a sizer. The circumstances in which he had been brought up were not such as to foster pride, but the delicacy of his mind revolted against the petty and degrading tyranny to which the grade of a sizer was then subjected. It is much to the honour of Cambridge, that it was the first to do away with the custom, which imposed the performance of a servile office on the young scholars of talent, who had less wealth, though abundantly more learning than their associates. Poor Goldsmith experienced all the evils of the system, as it was then in vogue, to their full extent; but he continued to endure them for three years, without allowing his temper to overcome his prudence; till, towards the end of that period, he became involved in an adventure, which obliged him to leave the college for a time: but he returned, and in 1749 took the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

On thus completing his course of preliminary study, he was advised by Mr. Contarine to turn his attention to that of medicine; an advice which he appears to have readily followed, as in 1752 we find him regularly pursuing the science in the university of Edinburgh.

It is well known that the time he spent there was not passed in the most agreeable manner, and he took a pleasure in venting his occasional fits of ill-humour in sarcastic remarks on the country and its inhabitants. A kindly and good-natured pleasantry is, however, observable even in his sarcasms; and among the few letters he has left, those which he wrote to his friends at this period are perhaps the most amusing. Among the letters written at this period is one ludicrously descriptive of his opinion respecting the Scotch character. "I shall tire you," he says, "with a description of this unfruitful country, where I must lead you over their hills all brown with heath, or their

valleys scarce able to feed a rabbit! Man alone seems to be the only creature who has arrived to the natural size in this poor soil; every part of the country presents the same dismal landscape: no grove or brook lend their music to cheer the stranger, or make the inhabitants forget their poverty: yet with all these disadvantages to call him down to humility, a Scotchman is one of the proudest things alive: the poor have pride ever-ready to relieve them; if mankind should happen to despise them, they are masters of their own admiration, and that they can plentifully bestow on themselves. From their pride and poverty, as I take it, results one advantage this country enjoys; namely, the gentlemen are much better bred than amongst us. No such character here as our fox-hunters; and they have expressed great surprise, when I informed them that some men in Ireland, of a thousand pounds a year, spend their whole lives in running after a hare, drinking to be drunk, and getting every girl that will let them with child; and, truly, if such a being, equipped in his hunting-dress, came among a circle of Scotch gentry, they would behold him with the same astonishment that a countryman would King George on horseback. The men have generally high cheek-bones, and are lean and swarthy, fond of action, dancing in particular; though, now I have mentioned dancing, let me say something of their balls, which are very frequent here. When a stranger enters the dancing-hall, he sees one end of the room taken up with the ladies, who sit, dismally, in a group by themselves; on the other end stand their pensive partners, that are to be; but no more intercourse between the sexes than there is between two countries at war. The ladies, indeed, may ogle, and the gentlemen sigh; but an embargo is laid on any closer commerce. At length, to interrupt hostilities, the lady-directress, or intendant, or what you will, pitches on a gentleman and lady to walk a minuet, which they perform with a formality that approaches despondence: after five or six couple have thus walked the gauntlet, all stand up to country-dances, each gentleman furnished with a partner from the aforesaid lady-directress: so they dance much, and say nothing; and thus concludes our assembly. I told a Scotch gentleman that such

profound silence resembled the ancient procession of the Roman matrons in honour of Ceres; and the Scotch gentleman told me (and, faith, I believe he was right) that I was a very great pedant for my pains. Now I am come to the ladies; and to show that I love Scotland, and every thing that belongs to so charming a country, I insist on it, and will give him leave to break my head that denies it, that the Scotch ladies are ten thousand times handsomer and finer than the Irish. To be sure, now, I see your sisters, Betty and Peggy, vastly surprised at my partiality; but tell them flatly, I don't value them, or their fine skins, or eyes, or good sense, or —, a potato; for I say it, and will maintain it; and, as a convincing proof (I'm in a very great passion) of what I assert, the Scotch ladies say it themselves. But, to be less serious, where will you find a language so pretty, become a pretty mouth, as the broad Scotch? and the women here speak it in its highest purity. For instance, teach one of your young ladies to pronounce, 'Whoar will I gong?' with a becoming wideness of mouth, and I'll lay my life they will wound every hearer." He, however, in some degree, softens his satire on the ladies, and at the same time feelingly alludes to his situation, and his own homeliness of person, in the following passage of the same letter: "But how ill, my Bob, does it become me to ridicule women, with whom I have scarce any correspondence! There are, 'tis certain, handsome women here, and 'tis as certain there are handsome men to keep them company. An ugly and a poor man is society for himself; and such society the world lets me enjoy in great abundance."

But, notwithstanding the privations and difficulties with which he had thus to struggle, he continued steadily to pursue his studies, and after the usual residence at Edinburgh proceeded to Leyden. It appears, however, that, studious as he was, and much as he was straitened in his circumstances, he allowed himself to be tempted into a love of gambling, which more than once placed him on the verge of ruin. Owing to difficulties thus contracted, he found himself obliged to leave Leyden, and commenced the long pedestrian tour, by which he gained, it is probable, more valuable knowledge, both as a

moralist and a poet, than he would have gained as a physician by a longer residence amid the dangers of a crowded city. Few persons would have had the courage to undertake a journey such as that which he contemplated, with means considerably better than those he possessed : but Goldsmith had at the same time a stronger, as well as a tenderer spirit than most men ; and he passed, without money in his pocket, over France, Italy, and the greater part of Germany. At one time his flute, at another his learning, furnished him with support ; and he was now a poor minstrel labouring hard to amuse a rustic audience, and now a scholar possessed of sufficient erudition and hardihood to seek board and shelter in the monasteries, by daring to dispute on the most abstruse themes with their holy inmates. At Louvain he is reported to have taken a degree ; and he contrived to reside several months at Padua, at this time one of the most distinguished seminaries of education on the Continent.

But this mode of life could not long present the fascinating attractions, with which it may for a short time allure a man of Goldsmith's habits and temperament. After spending, therefore, about twelve months in his travels, he returned to England ; and, having neither money nor friends, was obliged, as the only immediate resource at hand, to accept a situation as usher in a school at Peckham. This was the darkest period of his life ; and the narrative which he has put into the mouth of George seems to have been in every respect a faithful picture of the miseries he endured in his new employment. It was with great joy, consequently, that he obtained the situation of journeyman to a chemist on Fish-street Hill, where he might have remained in obscurity for years, but for the providential visit of Dr. Sleight, his friend and fellow-student, to the shop, in which he was performing the part of what might be considered porter to the establishment. The kindness and liberality of the doctor, and his respect for Goldsmith's talents, induced him to take immediate steps for placing him in a better situation ; and through his exertions our poet was in a short time respectably settled as a physician, first on Bankside, and afterwards in the neighbourhood of the Temple.

Improved, however, as his circumstances apparently were by this change, they were not considerably so in reality. The fees he received were few and rare ; and he was at length obliged to have recourse to his genius, as the only means in England, as it had been on the Continent, of obtaining bread. His first great literary speculation was the publication of an *Essay on Polite Literature in Europe*, by subscription ; the profits of which he expected would be sufficient to enable him to proceed to India, where he had obtained an appointment as physician at one of the Company's factories.

But this undertaking failed ; and he was constrained to pursue the profession of an author, seeking employment among the booksellers and the conductors of periodicals. In this manner it was that he became an essayist ; and his excellent little work, the *Citizen of the World*, was the result of his lucubrations, while at this stage of his literary career. At that period a higher value was set upon an ingenious essay than in the present ; and we find that Goldsmith's talents had become sufficiently well known in the year 1761, to render his acquaintance acceptable to Dr. Johnson. The *Vicar of Wakefield* was produced some time after their friendship commenced ; and it was mainly owing to the kindness of Johnson that it found its way into the world. "I received," says he, as his words are recorded by his biographer, "a message one morning from poor Goldsmith, that he was in great distress ; and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly : I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of *Madeira* and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me, that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit ; told the landlady I should soon return ; and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged

his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

It is worthy of mention, however, that Newberry, to whom the work was sold, had so little hope of its success, that he allowed the manuscript to remain unpublished till the appearance of the Traveller, which so increased the fame of the author, that he no longer feared the possibility of obtaining the attention of the public for his novel. The success of both the poem and the tale were of the most encouraging kind; and the author, on the strength of that success, assumed the scarlet cloak, and other insignia of his honourable profession; became a member of the celebrated Literary Club, which consisted of the first men of the age; and lived in a style altogether becoming the change which he had made in his external appearance. But this involved him in difficulties, which kept him continually toiling at the oar; and his fine mind was thus employed in making abridgments and compilations, while it was so well able to produce works which might have improved his age and delighted posterity. The Letters on the History of England, originally ascribed to Lord Littleton, the abridgments of the histories of Rome, Greece, and England, and a collection of miscellaneous pieces, were the result of his labours at this period. But the lively little poem of Retaliation, the comedy of She Stoops to Conquer, that of the Good-natured Man, and the History of the Earth and Animated Nature, afford the most convincing proofs how fertile and active his genius remained under all the hindrances which opposed its fair exertion. The termination of Goldsmith's career and life, which was accelerated by his improperly administering to himself a dose of James's powders, took place April 4th, 1774.

In his person he exhibited few indications of the excellence of his mind. He was low and stout; and his face, which was strongly marked with the small-pox, would have been positively disagreeable, but for the strong marks which it bore of that habit of reflection, which, unpromising as it was, it could not wholly conceal. Of his temper, all who have spoken of him are agreed in saying, that he was inconsiderate in pecuniary matters, and warm in his feelings; but faithful in his friendships,

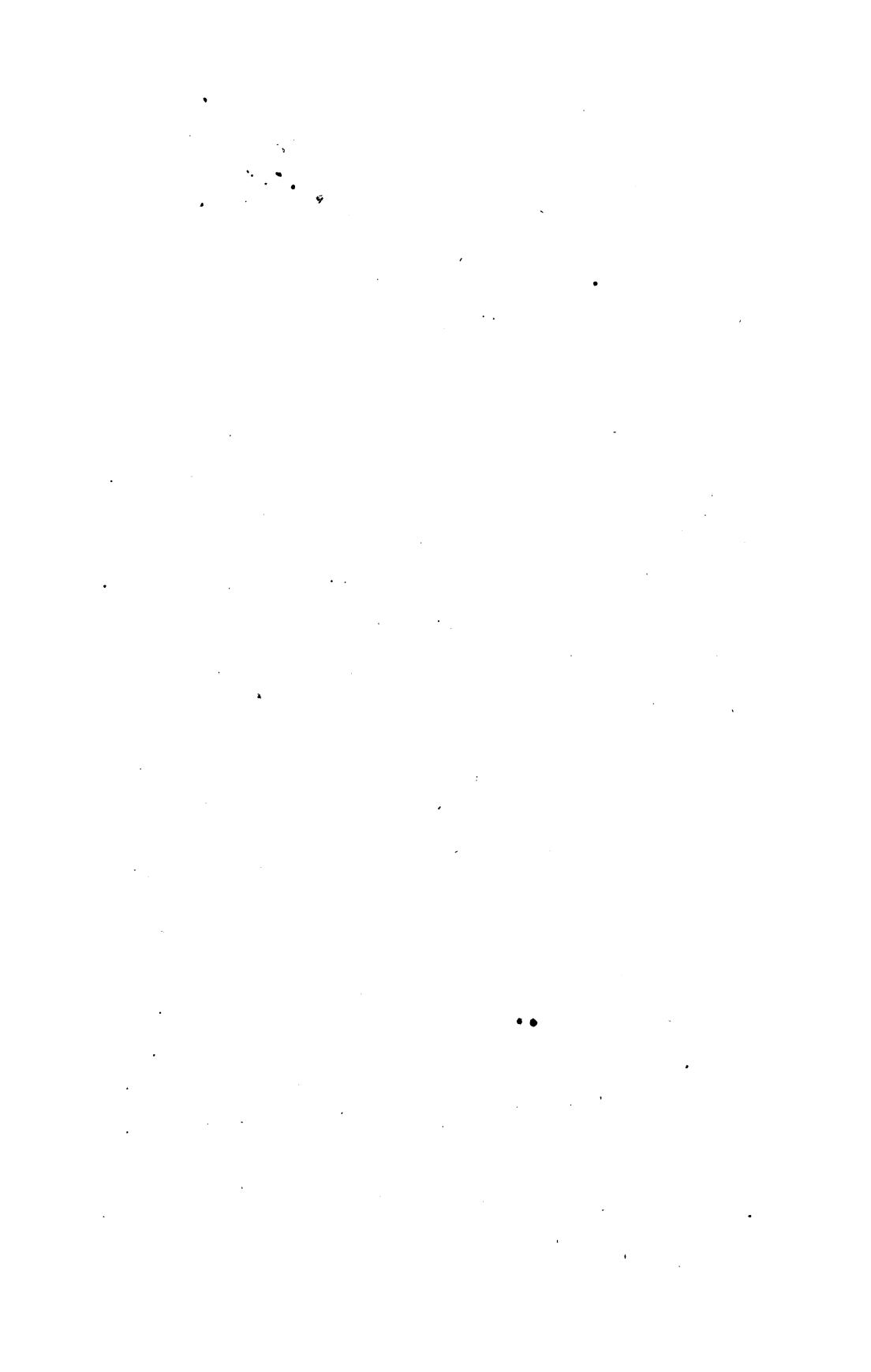
generous even beyond his means, and gentle and benevolent in all his actions and dispositions. His works are too widely circulated to render it necessary that we should eulogise him as an author. The Vicar of Wakefield, with which we are at present only concerned, is allowed by all persons of taste to be one of the brightest gems of the whole circle of modern fiction. It can never be read without emotion and profit : it is as beautiful as it is true, and as true as it is beautiful.

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THERE are a hundred faults in this thing, and a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties : but it is needless. A book may be amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity. The hero of this piece unites in himself the three greatest characters upon earth ; he is a priest, a husbandman, and the father of a family. He is drawn as ready to teach, and ready to obey ; as simple in affluence, and majestic in adversity. In this age of opulence and refinement, how can such a character please ? Such as are fond of high life, will turn with disdain from the simplicity of his country fire-side ; such as mistake ribaldry for humour, will find no wit in his harmless conversation ; and such as have been taught to deride religion, will laugh at one, whose chief stores of comfort are drawn from futurity.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

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THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

The description of the family of Wakefield, in which a kindred likeness prevails,
as well of minds as of persons.

I WAS ever of opinion, that the honest man who married and brought up a large family, did more service than he who continued single, and only talked of population. From this motive, I had scarce taken orders a year, before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well. To do her justice, she was a good-natured notable woman ; and as for breeding, there were few country ladies who could show more. She could read any English book without much spelling ; but for pickling, preserving, and cookery, none could excel her. She prided herself, also, upon being an excellent contriver in housekeeping ; though I could never find that we grew richer with all her contrivances.

However, we loved each other tenderly, and our fondness increased as we grew old. There was, in fact, nothing that could make us angry with the world or each other. We had an elegant house, situated in a fine country, and a good neighbourhood. The year was spent in moral or rural amusements, in visiting our rich neighbours, and relieving such as were poor. We had no revolutions to fear, nor fatigues to undergo ; all our

adventures were by the fire-side, and all our migrations from the blue bed to the brown.

As we lived near the road, we often had the traveller or stranger visit us, to taste our gooseberry wine, for which we had great reputation ; and I profess, with the veracity of an historian, that I never knew one of them find fault with it. Our cousins too, even to the fortieth remove, all remembered their affinity, without any help from the herald's office, and came very frequently to see us. Some of them did us no great honour by these claims of kindred ; as we had the blind, the maimed, and the halt amongst the number. However, my wife always insisted, that, as they were the same flesh and blood, they should sit with us at the same table. So that if we had not very rich, we generally had very happy friends about us ; for this remark will hold good through life, that the poorer the guest, the better pleased he ever is with being treated : and as some men gaze with admiration at the colours of a tulip, or the wing of a butterfly, so I was by nature an admirer of happy human faces. However, when any one of our relations was found to be a person of a very bad character, a troublesome guest, or one we desired to get rid of, upon his leaving my house I ever took care to lend him a riding coat, or a pair of boots, or sometimes a horse of small value ; and I always had the satisfaction of finding he never came back to return them. By this the house was cleared of such as we did not like ; but never was the family of Wakefield known to turn the traveller or a poor dependant out of doors.

Thus we lived several years in a state of much happiness ; not but that we sometimes had those little rubs which Providence sends to enhance the value of its favors. My orchard was often robbed by schoolboys, and my wife's custards plundered by the cats or the children. The Squire would sometimes fall asleep in the most pathetic parts of my sermon, or his lady return my wife's civilities at church with a mutilated curtsey. But we soon got over the uneasiness caused by such accidents, and usually in three or four days began to wonder how they vexed us.

My children, the offspring of temperance, as they were educated without softness, so they were at once well formed and healthy ; my sons hardy and active, my daughters beautiful and blooming. When I stood in the midst of the little circle, which

promised to be the supports of my declining age, I could not avoid repeating the famous story of Count Abensberg, who, in Henry II.'s progress through Germany, while other courtiers came with their treasures, brought his thirty-two children, and presented them to his sovereign as the most valuable offering he had to bestow. In this manner, though I had but six, I considered them as a very valuable present made to my country, and consequently looked upon it as my debtor. Our eldest son was named George, after his uncle, who left us ten thousand pounds. Our second child, a girl, I intended to call after her aunt Grissel; but my wife, who during her pregnancy had been reading romances, insisted on her being called Olivia. In less than another year, we had another daughter, and now I was determined that Grissel should be her name; but a rich relation taking a fancy to stand godmother, the girl was by her directions called Sophia: so that we had two romantic names in the family; but I solemnly protest I had no hand in it. Moses was our next; and after an interval of twelve years, we had two sons more.

It would be fruitless to deny my exultation when I saw my little ones about me; but the vanity and satisfaction of my wife were even greater than mine. When our visitors would say—"Well, upon my word, Mrs. Primrose, you have the finest children in the whole country,"—"Ay, neighbour," she would answer, "they are as heaven made them; handsome enough, if they be good enough; for handsome is that handsome does:" and then she would bid the girls hold up their heads; who, to conceal nothing, were certainly very handsome. Mere outside is so very trifling a circumstance with me, that I should have scarce remembered to mention it, had it not been a general topic of conversation in the country. Olivia, now about eighteen, had the luxuriancy of beauty with which painters generally draw Hebe; open, sprightly, and commanding. Sophia's features were not so striking at first, but often did more certain execution; for they were soft, modest, and alluring. The one vanquished by a single blow, the other by efforts successfully repeated.

The temper of a woman is generally formed from the turn of her features; at least it was so with my daughters. Olivia wished for many lovers; Sophia to secure one: Olivia was often affect-

ed, from too great a desire to please ; Sophia even repressed excellence, from her fears to offend : the one entertained me with her vivacity when I was gay, the other with her sense when I was serious. But these qualities were never carried to excess in either, and I have often seen them exchange characters for a whole day together. A suit of mourning has transformed my coquette into a prude, and a new set of ribands has given her youngest sister more than natural vivacity. My eldest son, George, was bred at Oxford, as I intended him for one of the learned professions. My second boy, Moses, whom I designed for business, received a sort of miscellaneous education at home. But it is needless to attempt describing the particular characters of young people that had seen but very little of the world : in short, a family likeness prevailed through all, and, properly speaking, they had but one character ; that of being all equally generous, credulous, simple, and inoffensive.

CHAPTER II.

Family misfortunes.—The loss of fortune only serves to increase the pride of the worthy.

THE temporal concerns of our family were chiefly committed to my wife's management ; as to the spiritual, I took them entirely under my own direction. The profits of my living, which amounted to about thirty-five pounds a year, I made over to the orphans and widows of the clergy of our diocese ; for having a sufficient fortune of my own, I was careless of temporalities, and felt a secret pleasure in doing my duty without reward. I also set a resolution of keeping no curate, and of being acquainted with every man in the parish, exhorting the married men to temperance, and the bachelors to matrimony ; so that in a few years it was a common saying, that there were three strange wants at Wakefield : a parson wanting pride, young men wanting wives, and alehouses wanting customers.

Matrimony was always one of my favourite topics, and I wrote several sermons to prove its happiness : but there was a peculiar tenet which I made a point of supporting : for I maintained with Whiston, that it was unlawful for a priest of the church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take a second : or, to express it in one word, I valued myself upon being a strict monogamist.

I was early initiated into this important dispute, on which so many laborious volumes have been written. I published some tracts upon the subject myself, which, as they never sold, I have the consolation of thinking are read only by the happy *few*. Some of my friends called this my weak side ; but, alas ! they had not like me made it the subject of long contemplation. The more I reflected upon it, the more important it appeared. I even went a step beyond Whiston in displaying my principles : as he had engraven upon his wife's tomb that she was the *only* wife of William Whiston, so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, economy, and obedience till death ; and having got it copied fair, with an elegant frame, it was placed over the chimney-piece, where it answered several very useful purposes : it admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her ; it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly put her in mind of her end.

It was thus, perhaps, from hearing marriage so often recommended, that my eldest son, just upon leaving college, fixed his affections upon the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman, who was a dignitary in the church, and in circumstances to give her a large fortune : but fortune was her smallest accomplishment. Miss Arabella Wilmot was allowed by all, except my two daughters, to be completely pretty : her youth, health, and innocence, were still heightened by a complexion so transparent, and such a happy sensibility of look, as even age could not gaze on with indifference. As Mr. Wilmot knew that I could make a very handsome settlement on my son, he was not averse to the match ; so both families lived together in all that harmony which generally precedes an expected alliance. Being convinced by experience, that the days of courtship are the most happy of our lives, I was willing enough to lengthen the period ; and the various amusements which the young couple every day shared

in each other's company, seemed to increase their passion. We were generally awaked in the morning by music, and on fine days rode a hunting. The hours between breakfast and dinner the ladies devoted to dress and study; they usually read a page, and then gazed at themselves in the glass, which even philosophers might own often presented the page of greatest beauty. At dinner my wife took the lead; for as she always insisted upon carving every thing herself, it being her mother's way, she gave us upon these occasions the history of every dish. When we had dined, to prevent the ladies leaving us, I generally ordered the table to be removed; and sometimes, with the music-master's assistance, the girls would give us a very agreeable concert. Walking out, drinking tea, country dances, and forfeits, shortened the rest of the day, without the assistance of cards, as I hated all manner of gaming, except backgammon, at which my old friend and I sometimes took a two-penny hit. Nor can I here pass over an ominous circumstance that happened the last time we played together: I only wanted to fling a quatre, and yet I threw deuce-ace five times running.

Some months were elapsed in this manner, till at last it was thought convenient to fix a day for the nuptials of the young couple, who seemed earnestly to desire it. During the preparations for the wedding, I need not describe the busy importance of my wife, nor the sly looks of my daughters: in fact, my attention was fixed on another subject—the completing a tract which I intended shortly to publish in defence of my favourite principle. As I looked upon this as a masterpiece, both for argument and style, I could not in the pride of my heart avoid showing it to my old friend Mr. Wilmot, as I made no doubt of receiving his approbation; but not till too late I discovered that he was most violently attached to the contrary opinion, and with good reason; for he was at that time actually courting a fourth wife. This, as may be expected, produced a dispute attended with some acrimony, which threatened to interrupt our intended alliance; but on the day before that appointed for the ceremony, we agreed to discuss the subject at large.

It was managed with proper spirit on both sides: he asserted that I was heterodox; I retorted the charge; he replied, and I rejoined. In the mean time, while the controversy was hottest, I was called out by one of my relations, who, with a face of

concern, advised me to give up the dispute, at least till my son's wedding was over.—“How,” cried I, “relinquish the cause of truth, and let him be a husband, already driven to the very verge of absurdity! You might as well advise me to give up my fortune as my argument.” “Your fortune,” returned my friend, “I am now sorry to inform you, is almost nothing. The merchant in town, in whose hands your money was lodged, has gone off, to avoid a statute of bankruptcy, and is thought not to have left a shilling in the pound. I was unwilling to shock you or the family with the account till after the wedding: but now it may serve to moderate your warmth in the argument; for, I suppose, your own prudence will enforce the necessity of dissembling, at least till your son has the young lady's fortune secure.”—“Well,” returned I, “if what you tell me be true, and if I am to be a beggar, it shall never make me a rascal, or induce me to disavow my principles. I'll go this moment and inform the company of my circumstances; and as for the argument, I even here retract my former concessions in the old gentleman's favour, nor will I allow him now to be a husband, in any sense of the expression.”

It would be endless to describe the different sensations of both families when I divulged the news of our misfortune; but what others felt was slight to what the lovers appeared to endure. Mr. Wilmot, who seemed before sufficiently inclined to break off the match, was by this blow soon determined: one virtue he had in perfection, which was prudence, too often the only one that is left us at seventy-two.

CHAPTER III.

A migration.—The fortunate circumstances of our lives are generally found at last to be of our own procuring.

THE only hope of our family now was, that the report of our misfortunes might be malicious or premature; but a letter from my agent in town soon came with a confirmation of every particular. The loss of fortune to myself alone would have been trifling; the only uneasiness I felt was for my family, who were to be humble without an education to render them callous to contempt.

Near a fortnight had passed before I attempted to restrain their affliction; for premature consolation is but the remembrancer of sorrow. During this interval, my thoughts were employed on some future means of supporting them; and at last a small cure of fifteen pounds a year was offered me in a distant neighbourhood, where I could still enjoy my principles without molestation. With this proposal I joyfully closed, having determined to increase my salary by managing a little farm.

Having taken this resolution, my next care was to get together the wrecks of my fortune; and all debts collected and paid, out of fourteen thousand pounds, we had but four hundred remaining. My chief attention, therefore, was now to bring down the pride of my family to their circumstances; for I well knew, that aspiring beggary is wretchedness itself. "You cannot be ignorant, my children," cried I, "that no prudence of ours could have prevented our late misfortune; but prudence may do much in disappointing its effects. We are now poor, my fondlings, and wisdom bids us conform to our humble situation. Let us then, without repining, give up those splendours with which numbers are wretched, and seek in humbler circumstances that peace with which all may be happy. The poor live pleasantly without our help; why then should not we learn to live without

theirs? No, my children, let us from this moment give up all pretensions to gentility; we have still enough left for happiness, if we are wise, and let us draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune."

As my eldest son was bred a scholar, I determined to send him to town, where his abilities might contribute to our support and his own. The separation of friends and families is, perhaps, one of the most distressful circumstances attendant on penury. The day soon arrived on which we were to disperse for the first time. My son, after taking leave of his mother and the rest, who mingled their tears with their kisses, came to ask a blessing from me. This I gave him from my heart, and which, added to five guineas, was all the patrimony I had now to bestow. "You are going, my boy," said I, "to London on foot, in the manner Hooker, your great ancestor, travelled there before you. Take from me the same horse that was given him by the good bishop Jewel, this staff, and take this book too; it will be your comfort on the way: these two lines in it are worth a million—I *have been young, and am now old; yet never saw I the righteous man forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.* Let this be your consolation as you travel on. Go, my boy; whatever be thy fortune, let me see thee once a year; still keep a good heart, and farewell." As he was possessed of integrity and honour, I was under no apprehensions from throwing him naked into the amphitheatre of life; for I knew he would act a good part, whether vanquished or victorious.

His departure only prepared the way for our own, which arrived a few days afterwards. The leaving a neighbourhood in which we had enjoyed so many hours of tranquillity, was not without a tear, which scarce fortitude itself could suppress. Besides, a journey of seventy miles to a family that had hitherto never been above ten from home, filled us with apprehension, and the cries of the poor, who followed us for some miles, contributed to increase it. The first day's journey brought us in safety within thirty miles of our future retreat, and we put up for the night at an obscure inn in a village by the way. When we were shown a room, I desired the landlord, in my usual way, to let us have his company, with which he complied, as what he drank would increase the bill next morning. He knew, however, the whole neighbourhood to which I was removing, particularly

Squire Thornhill, who was to be my landlord, and who lived within a few miles of the place. This gentleman he described as one who desired to know little more of the world than its pleasures, being particularly remarkable for his attachment to the fair sex. He observed, that no virtue was able to resist his arts and assiduity, and that there was scarce a farmer's daughter within ten miles round but what had found him successful and faithless. Though this account gave me some pain, it had a very different effect upon my daughters, whose features seemed to brighten with the expectation of an approaching triumph; nor was my wife less pleased and confident of their allurements and virtue. While our thoughts were thus employed, the hostess entered the room to inform her husband, that the strange gentleman, who had been two days in the house, wanted money, and could not satisfy them for his reckoning. "Want money!" replied the host, "that must be impossible; for it was no later than yesterday he paid three guineas to our beadle to spare an old broken soldier that was to be whipped through the town for dog-stealing." The hostess, however, still persisting in her first assertion, he was preparing to leave the room, swearing that he would be satisfied one way or another, when I begged the landlord would introduce me to a stranger of so much charity as he described. With this he complied, showing in a gentleman who seemed to be about thirty, dressed in clothes that once were laced. His person was well formed, and his face marked with the lines of thinking; he had something short and dry in his address, and seemed not to understand ceremony or to despise it. Upon the landlord's leaving the room, I could not avoid expressing my concern to the stranger at seeing a gentleman in such circumstances, and offered him my purse to satisfy the present demand. "I take it with all my heart, Sir," replied he, "and am glad that a late oversight in giving what money I had about me, has shown me that there are still some men like you. I must, however, previously entreat being informed of the name and residence of my benefactor, in order to repay him as soon as possible." In this I satisfied him fully, not only mentioning my name and late misfortune, but the place to which I was going to remove. "This," cried he, "happens still more lucky than I hoped for, as I am going the same way myself, having been detained here two days by the floods, which, I hope, by to-morrow will be found pas-

sable." I testified the pleasure I should have in his company, and my wife and daughters joining in entreaty, he was prevailed upon to stay supper. The stranger's conversation, which was at once pleasing and instructive, induced me to wish for a continuance of it; but it was now high time to retire, and take refreshment against the fatigues of the following day.

The next morning we all set forward together: my family on horseback, while Mr. Burchell, our new companion, walked along the foot-path by the road side, observing, with a smile, that as we were ill mounted, he would be too generous to attempt leaving us behind. As the floods were not yet subsided, we were obliged to hire a guide, who trotted on before, Mr. Burchell and I bringing up the rear. We lightened the fatigues of the road with philosophical disputes, which he seemed to understand perfectly. But what surprised me most was, that though he was a money-borrower, he defended his opinions with as much obstinacy as if he had been my patron. He now and then also informed me to whom the different seats belonged that lay in our view as we travelled the road. "That," cried he, pointing to a very magnificent house which stood at some distance, "belongs to Mr. Thornhill, a young gentleman who enjoys a large fortune, though entirely dependent on the will of his uncle, Sir William Thornhill, a gentleman, who, content with a little himself, permits his nephew to enjoy the rest, and chiefly resides in town." "What!" cried I, "is my young landlord then the nephew of a man whose virtues, generosity, and singularities are so universally known? I have heard Sir William Thornhill represented as one of the most generous, yet whimsical men in the kingdom; a man of consummate benevolence."—"Something, perhaps, too much so," replied Mr. Burchell, "at least he carried benovolence to an excess when young; for his passions were then strong, and as they all were upon the side of virtue, they led it up to a romantic extreme. He early began to aim at the qualifications of the soldier and the scholar; was soon distinguished in the army, and had some reputation among men of learning. Adulation ever follows the ambitious; for such alone receive most pleasure from flattery. He was surrounded with crowds, who showed him only one side of their character; so that he began to lose a regard for private interest in universal

sympathy. He loved all mankind; for fortune prevented him from knowing that there were rascals. Physicians tell us of a disorder in which the whole body is so exquisitely sensible, that the slightest touch gives pain: what some have thus suffered in their persons, this gentleman felt in his mind. The slightest distress, whether real or fictitious, touched him to the quick, and his soul laboured under a sickly sensibility of the miseries of others. Thus disposed to relieve, it will be easily conjectured, he found numbers disposed to solicit: his profusions began to impair his fortune, but not his good-nature; that, indeed, was seen to increase as the other seemed to decay: he grew improvident as he grew poor, and though he talked like a man of sense, his actions were those of a fool. Still, however, being surrounded with importunity, and no longer able to satisfy every request that was made him, instead of *money* he gave *promises*—they were all he had to bestow, and he had not resolution enough to give any man pain by a denial. By this he drew round him crowds of dependents, whom he was sure to disappoint, yet wished to relieve. These hung upon him for a time, and left him with merited reproaches and contempt. But in proportion as he became contemptible to others, he became despicable to himself: his mind had leaned upon their adulation, and that support taken away, he could find no pleasure in the applause of his heart, which he had never learned to reverence. The world now began to wear a different aspect. The flattery of his friends began to dwindle into simple approbation; approbation soon took the more friendly form of advice, and advice, when rejected, produced their reproaches. He now, therefore, found that such friends as benefits had gathered round him, were little estimable: he now found, that a man's own heart must be ever given to gain that of another. I now found, that—that—I forget what I was going to observe: in short, Sir, he resolved to respect himself, and laid down a plan of restoring his falling fortune. For this purpose, in his own whimsical manner, he travelled through Europe on foot, and now, though he has scarce attained the age of thirty, his circumstances are more affluent than ever. At present his bounties are more rational and moderate than before; but still he preserves the character of an humorist, and finds most pleasure in eccentric virtues."

My attention was so much taken up by Mr. Burchell's account, that I scarce looked forward as we went along, till we were alarmed by the cries of my family, when turning, I perceived my youngest daughter in the midst of a rapid stream, thrown from her horse, and struggling with the torrent. She had sunk twice, nor was it in my power to disengage myself in time to bring her relief. My sensations were even too violent to permit my attempting her rescue; she must have certainly perished, had not my companion, perceiving her danger, instantly plunged in to her relief, and, with some difficulty, brought her in safety to the opposite shore. By taking the current a little farther up, the rest of the family got safely over; where we had an opportunity of joining our acknowledgments to hers. Her gratitude may be more readily imagined than described: she thanked her deliverer more with looks than words, and continued to lean upon his arm, as if still willing to receive assistance. My wife also hoped one day to have the pleasure of returning his kindness at her own house. Thus, after we were refreshed at the next inn, and had dined together, as Mr. Burchell was going to a different part of the country, he took leave, and we pursued our journey; my wife observing, as we went, that she liked him extremely, and protesting, that if he had birth and fortune to entitle him to match into such a family as ours, she knew no man she would sooner fix upon. I could not but smile to hear her talk in this lofty strain; but I was never much displeased with those harmless delusions that tend to make us more happy.

CHAPTER IV.

A proof that even the humblest fortune may grant happiness, which depends not on circumstances, but constitution.

THE place of our retreat was in a little neighbourhood, consisting of farmers who tilled their own grounds, and were equal strangers to opulence and poverty. As they had almost all the conveniencies of life within themselves, they seldom visited towns or cities in search of superfluities. Remote from the polite, they still retained the primeval simplicity of manners; and frugal by habit, they scarce knew that temperance was a virtue. They wrought with cheerfulness on days of labour, but observed festivals as intervals of idleness and pleasure. They kept up the Christmas carol, sent true love-knots on Valentine-morning, eat pancakes on Shrovetide, showed their wit on the first of April, and religiously cracked nuts on Michaelmas-eve. Being apprised of our approach, the whole neighbourhood came out to meet their minister, dressed in their finest clothes, and preceded by a pipe and tabor; a feast also was provided for our reception, at which we sat cheerfully down; and what the conversation wanted in wit was made up in laughter.

Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful underwood behind, and a prattling river before; on one side a meadow, on the other a green. My farm consisted of about twenty acres of excellent land, having given a hundred pounds for my predecessor's good-will. Nothing could exceed the neatness of my little inclosures, the elms and hedgerows appearing with inexpressible beauty. My house consisted of but one story, and was covered with thatch, which gave it an air of great snugness; the walls on the inside were nicely white-washed, and my daughters undertook to adorn them with pictures of their own designing. Though the same room served us for parlour and kitchen, that only made it the

warmer. Besides, at it was kept with the utmost neatness, the dishes, plates, and coppers being well scoured, and all disposed in bright rows on the shelves, the eye was agreeably relieved, and did not want richer furniture. There were three other apartments, one for my wife and me, another for our two daughters, within our own, and the third, with two beds, for the rest of the children.

The little republic to which I gave laws was regulated in the following manner: by sunrise we all assembled in our common apartment, the fire being previously kindled by the servant. After we had saluted each other with proper ceremony—for I always thought fit to keep up some mechanical forms of good breeding, without which freedom ever destroys friendship—we all bent in gratitude to that Being who gave us another day. This duty being performed, my son and I went to pursue our usual industry abroad, while my wife and daughters employed themselves in providing breakfast, which was always ready at a certain time. I allowed half an hour for this meal, and an hour for dinner; which time was taken up in innocent mirth between my wife and daughters, and philosophical arguments between my son and me.

As we rose with the sun, so we never pursued our labour after it was gone down, but returned home to the expecting family, where smiling looks, a neat hearth, and pleasant fire, were prepared for our reception. Nor were we without guests: sometimes farmer Flamborough, our talkative neighbour, and often the blind piper, would pay us a visit, and taste our gooseberry wine; for the making of which we had lost neither the receipt nor the reputation. These harmless people had several ways of being good company; for while one played, the other would sing some soothing ballad, Johnny Armstrong's Last Goodnight, or the Cruelty of Barbara Allen. The night was concluded in the manner we began the morning, my youngest boys being appointed to read the lessons of the day, and he that read loudest, distinctest, and best, was to have a halfpenny on Sunday to put into the poor's box.

When Sunday came, it was indeed a day of finery, which all my sumptuary edicts could not restrain. How well soever I fancied my lectures against pride had conquered the vanity of my daughters, yet I still found them secretly attached to all their

former finery: they still loved laces, ribands, bugles and catgut; my wife herself retained a passion for her crimson paduasoy because I formerly happened to say it became her.

The first Sunday, in particular, their behaviour served to mortify me: I had desired my girls the preceding night to be dressed early the next day; for I always loved to be at church a good while before the rest of the congregation. They punctually obeyed my directions; but when we were to assemble in the morning at breakfast, down came my wife and daughters, dressed out in all their former splendour; their hair plastered up with pomatum, their faces patched to taste, their trains bundled up into a heap behind, and rustling at every motion. I could not help smiling at their vanity, particularly that of my wife, from whom I expected more discretion. In this exigence, therefore, my only resource was to order my son, with an important air, to call our coach. The girls were amazed at the command; but I repeated it with more solemnity than before. "Surely, my dear, you jest," cried my wife; "we can walk it perfectly well: we want no coach to carry us now."—"You mistake, child," returned I, "we do want a coach; for if we walk to church in this trim, the very children in the parish will hoot after us."—"Indeed," replied my wife, "I always imagined that my Charles was fond of seeing his children neat and handsome about him."—"You may be as neat as you please," interrupted I, "and I shall love you the better for it; but all this is not neatness, but frippery: these ruffings, and pinkings, and patchings, will only make us hated by all the wives of our neighbours. No, my children," continued I, more gravely, "those gowns may be altered into something of a plainer cut; for finery is very unbecoming in us, who want the means of decency. I do not know whether such flouncing and shredding is becoming even in the rich, if we consider, upon a moderate calculation, that the nakedness of the indigent world may be clothed from the trimmings of the vain."

This remonstrance had the proper effect; they went with great composure that very instant, to change their dress, and the next day I had the satisfaction of finding my daughters, at their own request, employed in cutting up their trains into Sunday waistcoats for Dick and Bill, the two little ones; and what was still more satisfactory, the gowns seemed improved by this curtailng.

CHAPTER V.

A new and great acquaintance introduced.—What we place most hopes upon generally proves most fatal.

AT a small distance from the house, my predecessor had made a seat, overshadowed by a hedge of hawthorn and honeysuckle. Here, when the weather was fine, and our labour soon finished, we usually sate together, to enjoy an extensive landscape in the calm of the evening: here too we drank tea, which now was become an occasional banquet; and as we had it but seldom, it diffused new joy, the preparations for it being made with no small share of bustle and ceremony. On these occasions, our two little ones always read for us, and they were regularly served after we had done. Sometimes, to give a variety to our amusements, the girls sung to the guitar; and while they thus formed a little concert, my wife and I would stroll down the sloping field, that was embellished with blue bells and centuary, talk of our children with rapture, and enjoy the breeze that wafted both health and harmony.

In this manner we began to find that every situation in life may bring its own peculiar pleasures; every morning waked us to a repetition of toil, but the evening repaid it with vacant hilarity.

It was about the beginning of autumn, on a holiday (for I kept such as intervals of relaxation from labour), that I had drawn out my family to our usual place of amusement, and our young musicians began their usual concert. As we were thus engaged, we saw a stag bound nimbly by, within about twenty paces of where we were sitting, and by its panting it seemed pressed by the hunters. We had not much time to reflect upon the poor animal's distress, when we perceived the dogs and horsemen come sweeping along at some distance behind, and making the very path it had taken. I was instantly for returning in with

my family; but either curiosity or surprise, or some more hidden motive, held my wife and daughters to their seats. The huntsman, who rode foremost, passed us with great swiftness, followed by four or five persons more, who seemed in equal haste. At last, a young gentleman of a more genteel appearance than the rest, came forward, and for a while regarding us, instead of pursuing the chase, stopped short, and, giving his horse to a servant who attended, approached us with a careless superior air. He seemed to want no introduction, but was going to salute my daughters as one certain of a kind reception; but they had early learned the lesson of looking presumption out of countenance: upon which he let us know that his name was Thornhill, and that he was the owner of the estate that lay for some extent round us: he again, therefore, offered to salute the female part of the family, and such was the power of fortune and fine clothes, that he found no second repulse. As his address, though confident, was easy, we soon became more familiar; and perceiving musical instruments lying near, he begged to be favoured with a song. As I did not approve of such disproportioned acquaintance, I winked upon my daughters, in order to prevent their compliance; but my hint was counteracted by one from their mother; so that with a cheerful air they gave us a favourite song of Dryden's. Mr. Thornhill seemed highly delighted with their performance and choice, and then took up the guitar himself. He played but very indifferently; however, my eldest daughter repaid his former applause with interest, and assured him that his tones were louder than even those of her master. At this compliment he bowed, which she returned with a courtesy: he praised her taste, and she commended his understanding: an age could not have made them better acquainted; while the fond mother too, equally happy, insisted upon her landlord's stepping in, and tasting a glass of her gooseberry. The whole family seemed earnest to please him: my girls attempted to entertain him with topics they thought most modern; while Moses, on the contrary, gave him a question or two from the ancients, for which he had the satisfaction of being laughed at: my little ones were no less busy, and fondly stuck close to the stranger. All my endeavours could scarce keep their dirty fingers from handling and tarnishing the lace on his clothes, and lifting up the flaps of his pocket-holes, to see what was there. At the approach of evening he took leave; but not

till he had requested permission to renew his visit, which, as he was our landlord, we most readily agreed to.

As soon as he was gone, my wife called a council on the conduct of the day. She was of opinion, that it was a most fortunate hit; for she had known even stranger things than that brought to bear. She hoped again to see the day in which we might hold up our heads with the best of them; and concluded, she protested she could see no reason why the two Miss Wrinklers should marry great fortunes, and her children get none. As this last argument was directed to me, I protested I could see no reason for it neither; nor why Mr. Simpkins got the ten thousand pounds prize in the lottery, and we sat down with a blank. "I protest, Charles," cried my wife, "this is the way you always damp my girls and me when we are in spirits. Tell me, Soph, my dear, what do you think of our new visitor? don't you think he seemed to be good-natured?"—"Immensely so, indeed, mamma," replied she. "I think he has a deal to say upon every thing, and is never at a loss; and the more trifling the subject, the more he has to say."—"Yes," cried Olivia, "he is well enough for a man; but, for my part, I don't much like him, he is so extremely impudent and familiar; but on the guitar he is shocking." These two last speeches I interpreted by contraries. I found by this, that Sophia internally despised, as much as Olivia secretly admired him. "Whatever may be your opinions of him, my children," cried I, "to confess a truth, he has not prepossessed me in his favour. Disproportioned friendships ever terminate in disgust; and I thought, notwithstanding all his ease, that he seemed perfectly sensible of the distance between us. Let us keep to companions of our own rank. There is no character more contemptible than a man that is a fortune-hunter; and I can see no reason why fortune-hunting women should not be contemptible too. Thus, at best, we shall be contemptible if his views are honourable; but if they be otherwise! I should shudder but to think of that! It is true I have no apprehensions from the conduct of my children, but I think there are some from his character." I would have proceeded, but for the interruption of a servant from the squire, who, with his compliments, sent us a side of venison, and a promise to dine with us some days after. This well-timed present pleaded more powerfully in his favour

than any thing I had to say could obviate. I therefore continued silent, satisfied with just having pointed out danger, and leaving it to their own discretion to avoid it. That virtue which requires to be ever guarded, is scarce worth the sentinel.

CHAPTER VI.

The happiness of a country fire-side.

As we carried on the former dispute with some degree of warmth, in order to accommodate matters, it was universally agreed, that we should have a part of the venison for supper, and the girls undertook the task with alacrity. "I am sorry," cried I, "that we have no neighbour or stranger to take part in this good cheer: feasts of this kind acquire a double relish from hospitality."—"Bless me," cried my wife, "here comes our good friend Mr. Burchell, that saved our Sophia, and that run you down fairly in the argument."—"Confute me in argument, child?" cried I; "you mistake there, my dear. I believe there are but few that can do that; I never dispute your abilities at making a goose-pie, and I beg you'll leave argument to me." As I spoke, poor Mr. Burchell entered the house, and was welcomed by the family, who shook him heartily by the hand, while little Dick officiously reached him a chair.

I was pleased with the poor man's friendship for two reasons: because I knew that he wanted mine, and I knew him to be friendly as far as he was able. He was known in our neighbourhood by the character of the poor gentleman that would do no good when he was young, though he was not yet thirty. He would at intervals talk with great good sense; but in general he was fondest of the company of children, whom he used to call harmless little men. He was famous, I found, for singing them ballads, and telling them stories; and seldom went out without something in his pockets for them—a piece of gingerbread or an halfpenny whistle. He generally came, for a few

days, into our neighbourhood once a year, and lived upon the neighbours' hospitality. He sat down to supper among us, and my wife was not sparing of her gooseberry wine. The tale went round; he sung us old songs, and gave the children the story of the Buck of Beverland, with the history of Patient Grizel, the adventures of Catskin, and then Fair Rosamond's Bower. Our cock, which always crew at eleven, now told us it was time for repose; but an unforeseen difficulty started about lodging the stranger: all our beds were already taken up, and it was too late to send him to the next alehouse. In this dilemma, little Dick offered him his part of the bed, if his brother Moses would let him lie with him; "And I," cried Bill, "will give Mr. Burchell my part, if my sisters will take me to theirs."—"Well done, my good children," cried I, "hospitality is one of the first christian duties. The beast retires to his shelter, and the bird flies to its nest; but helpless man can only find refuge from his fellow-creature. The greatest stranger in this world was he that came to save it. He never had a house, as if willing to see what hospitality was left remaining amongst us.—Deborah, my dear," cried I to my wife, "give those boys a lump of sugar each; and let Dick's be the largest, because he spoke first."

In the morning early I called out my whole family to help at saving an after-growth of hay, and our guest offering his assistance, he was accepted among the number. Our labours went on lightly: we turned the swath to the wind, I went foremost; and the rest followed in due succession. I could not avoid, however, observing the assiduity of Mr. Burchell in assisting my daughter Sophia in her part of the task. When he had finished his own, he would join in her's, and enter into a close conversation: but I had too good an opinion of Sophia's understanding, and was too well convinced of her ambition, to be under any uneasiness from a man of broken fortune. When we were finished for the day, Mr. Burchell was invited, as on the night before; but he refused, as he was to lie that night at a neighbour's to whose child he was carrying a whistle. When gone, our conversation at supper turned upon our late unfortunate guest. "What a strong instance," said I, "is that poor man, of the miseries attending a youth of levity and extravagance. He by no means wants sense, which only serves to aggravate his former folly. Poor forlorn

creature? where are now the revellers, the flatterers, that he could once inspire and command? Gone, perhaps, to attend the bagnio pander, grown rich by his extravagance. They once praised him, and now they applaud the pander: their former raptures at his wit, are now converted into sarcasms at his folly: he is poor, and perhaps deserves poverty; for he has neither the ambition to be independent, nor the skill to be useful." Prompted, perhaps, by some secret reasons, I delivered this observation with too much acrimony, which my Sophia gently reproved. "Whatsoever his former conduct may be, papa, his circumstances should exempt him from censure now. His present indigence is a sufficient punishment for former folly; and I have heard my papa himself say, that we should never strike one unnecessary blow at a victim over whom Providence holds the scourge of its resentment."—"You are right, Sophia," cried my son Moses, "and one of the ancients finely represents so malicious a conduct, by the attempts of a rustic to flay Marsyas, whose skin, the fable tells us, had been wholly stripped off by another. Besides, I don't know if this poor man's situation be so bad as my father would represent it. We are not to judge of the feelings of others by what we might feel if in their place. However dark the habitation of the mole to our eyes, yet the animal itself finds the apartment sufficiently lightsome: and, to confess the truth, this man's mind seems fitted to his station; for I never heard any one more sprightly than he was to-day, when he conversed with you." This was said without the least design; however, it excited a blush, which she strove to cover by an affected laugh; assuring him that she scarce took any notice of what he said to her; but that she believed he might once have been a very fine gentleman. The readiness with which she undertook to vindicate herself, and her blushing, were symptoms I did not internally approve; but I repressed my suspicions.

As we expected our landlord the next day, my wife went to make the venison pasty; Moses sat reading, while I taught the little ones; my daughters seemed equally busy with the rest; and I observed them for a good while cooking something over the fire. I at first supposed they were assisting their mother; but little Dick informed me, in a whisper, that they were making a wash for the face. Washes of all kinds I had a natural antipathy to; for I knew that, instead of mending the complexion

they spoiled it. I therefore approached my chair by sly degrees to the fire, and grasping the poker, as if it wanted mending, seemingly by accident, overturned the whole composition, and it was too late to begin another.

CHAPTER VII.

A town wit described.—The dullest fellows may learn to be comical for a night or two.

WHEN the morning arrived on which we were to entertain our young landlord, it may be easily supposed what provisions were exhausted to make an appearance: it may also be conjectured that my wife and daughters expended their gayest plumage upon this occasion. Mr. Thornhill came with a couple of friends, his chaplain and feeder. The servants, who were numerous, he politely ordered to the next alehouse; but my wife, in the triumph of her heart, insisted on entertaining them all; for which, by the by, our family was pinched for three weeks after. As Mr. Burchell had hinted to us, the day before, that he was making some proposals of marriage to Miss Wilmot, my son George's former mistress, this a good deal damped the heartiness of his reception: but accident, in some measure, relieved our embarrassment; for one of the company happening to mention her name, Mr. Thornhill observed, with an oath, that he never knew any thing more absurd than calling such a fright a beauty: "For, strike me ugly," continued he, "if I should not find as much pleasure in choosing my mistress by the information of a lamp under the clock at St. Dunstan's." At this he laughed, and so did we: the jests of the rich are ever successful. Olivia too could not avoid whispering, loud enough to be heard, that he had an infinite fund of humour.

After dinner, I began with my usual toast, the Church; for this I was thanked by the chaplain, as he said the Church was the only mistress of his affections. "Come, tell us honestly,

Frank;" said the squire, with his usual archness, "suppose the Church, your present mistress, dressed in lawn sleeves, on one hand, and Miss Sophia, with no lawn about her, on the other, which would you be for?"—"For both, to be sure," cried the chaplain.—"Right, Frank," cried the squire; "for may this glass suffocate me, but a fine girl is worth all the priestcraft in the creation. For what are tythes and tricks but an imposition, all a confounded imposture, and I can prove it."—"I wish you would," cried my son Moses, "and I think," continued he, "that I should be able to answer you."—"Very well, Sir," cried the squire, who immediately smoked him, and winked on the rest of the company, to prepare us for the sport; "if you are for a cool argument upon that subject, I am ready to accept the challenge. And first, whether are you for managing it analogically or dialogically?"—"I am for managing it rationally," cried Moses, quite happy at being permitted to dispute.—"Good again," cried the squire; "and firstly, of the first, I hope you'll not deny that whatever is, is. If you don't grant me that, I can go no further."—"Why," returned Moses, "I think I may grant that, and make the best of it."—"I hope, too," returned the other, "you'll grant that a part is less than the whole."—"I grant that, too," cried Moses, "it is but just and reasonable."—"I hope," cried the squire, "you will not deny, that the two angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones."—"Nothing can be plainer," returned the other, and looked round him with his usual importance. "Very well," cried the squire, speaking very quick: "the premises being thus settled, I proceed to observe, that the concatenation of self-existences, proceeding in a reciprocal duplicate ratio, naturally produce a problematical dialogism, which in some measure proves that the essence of spirituality may be referred to the second predicable."—"Hold, hold," cried the other, "I deny that: do you think I can thus tamely submit to such heterodox doctrines?"—"What," replied the squire, as if in a passion, "not submit? Answer me one plain question: Do you think Aristotle right when he says, that relatives are related?"—"Undoubtedly," replied the other.—"If so, then," cried the squire, "answer me directly to what I propose: Whether do you judge the analytical investigation of the first part of my enthymem deficient *secundum quoad*, or *quoad minus*? and give me your reasons, I say, directly."—"I protest," cried Moses,

"I don't rightly comprehend the force of your reasoning; but if it be reduced to one simple proposition, I fancy it may then have an answer."—"O, sir!" cried the squire, "I am your most humble servant: I find you want me to furnish you with argument and intellects too. No, sir, there, I protest, you are too hard for me." This effectually raised the laugh against poor Moses, who sat the only disinal figure in a group of merry faces; nor did he offer a single syllable more during the whole entertainment.

But though all this gave me no pleasure, it had a very different effect upon Olivia, who mistook it for humour, though but a mere act of the memory. She thought him, therefore, a very fine gentleman; and such as consider what powerful ingredients a good figure, fine clothes, and fortune are in that character, will easily forgive her. Mr. Thornhill, notwithstanding his real ignorance, talked with ease, and could expatiate upon the common topics of conversation with fluency. It is not surprising, then, that such talents should win the affections of a girl, who by education was taught to value an appearance in herself, and consequently to set a value upon it in another.

Upon his departure, we again entered into a debate upon the merits of our young landlord. As he directed his looks and conversation to Olivia, it was no longer doubted but that she was the object that induced him to be our visitor: nor did she seem to be much displeased at the innocent raillery of her brother and sister upon this occasion. Even Deborah herself seemed to share the glory of the day, and exulted in her daughter's victory as if it were her own. "And now, my dear," cried she to me, "I'll fairly own, that it was I that instructed my girls to encourage our landlord's addresses. I had always some ambition, and you now see that I was right; for who knows how this may end?" "Ay, who knows that, indeed," answered I, with a groan: "for my part, I don't much like it; and I could have been better pleased with one that was poor and honest, than this fine gentleman with his fortune and infidelity; for, depend on't, if he be what I suspect him, no freethinker shall ever have a child of mine."

"Sure, father," cried Moses, "you are too severe in this; for heaven will never arraign him for what he thinks, but for what he does. Every man has a thousand vicious thoughts, which

arise without his power to suppress. Thinking freely of religion may be involuntary with this gentleman : so that, allowing his sentiments to be wrong, yet as he is purely passive in his assent, he is no more to be blamed for his errors, than the governor of a city without walls for the shelter he is obliged to afford an invading enemy."

"True, my son," cried I; "but if the governor invites the enemy there, he is justly culpable: and such is always the case with those who embrace error. The vice does not lie in assenting to the proofs they see, but in being blind to many of the proofs that offer: so that, though our erroneous opinions be involuntary when formed, yet, as we have been wilfully corrupt, or very negligent in forming them, we deserve punishment for our vice, or contempt for our folly."

My wife now kept up the conversation, though not the argument: she observed, that several very prudent men of our acquaintance were freethinkers, and made very good husbands; and she knew some sensible girls that had skill enough to make converts of their spouses: "And who knows, my dear," continued she, "what Olivia may be able to do? The girl has a great deal to say upon every subject, and to my knowledge is very well skilled in controversy."

"Why, my dear, what controversy can she have read?" cried I. "It does not occur to me that I ever put such books into her hands: you certainly overrate her merit." "Indeed, papa," replied Olivia, "she does not; I have read the disputes between Thwackum and Square, the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday the savage, and I am now employed in reading the controversy in Religious Courtship." "Very well," cried I, "that's a good girl; I find you are perfectly qualified for making converts, and so go help your mother to make the gooseberry-pie."

CHAPTER VIII.

An amour, which promises little good fortune, yet may be productive of much.

THE next morning we were again visited by Mr. Burchell, though I began, for certain reasons, to be displeased with the frequency of his return; but I could not refuse him my company and fireside. It is true, his labour more than requited his entertainment; for he wrought among us with vigour, and, either in the meadow or at the hay-rick, put himself foremost. Besides, he had always something amusing to say that lessened our toil; and was at once so out of the way and yet so sensible, that I loved, laughed at, and pitied him. My only dislike arose from an attachment he discovered to my daughter: he would, in a jesting manner, call her his little mistress; and when he bought each of the girls a set of ribands, hers was the finest. I knew not how, but he every day seemed to become more amiable, his wit to improve, and his simplicity to assume the superior airs of wisdom.

Our family dined in the field, and we sat, or rather reclined, round a temperate repast, our cloth spread upon the hay, while Mr. Burchell gave cheerfulness to the feast. To heighten our satisfaction, two blackbirds answered each other from opposite hedges, the familiar redbreast came and picked the crumbs from our hands, and every sound seemed but the echo of tranquillity.—"I never sit thus," says Sophia, "but I think of the two lovers, so sweetly described by Mr. Gay, who were struck dead in each other's arms. There is something so pathetic in the description, that I have read it a hundred times with new rapture."—"In my opinion," cried my son, "the finest strokes in that description are much below those in the *Acis and Galatea* of Ovid. The Roman poet understands the use of contrast better; and upon that figure, artfully managed, all strength in the pathetic depends."—"It is remarkable," cried Mr. Burchell,

“that both the poets you mention have equally contributed to introduce a false taste into their respective countries, by loading all their lines with epithet. Men of little genius found them most easily imitated in their defects ; and English poetry, like that in the latter empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connexion ; a string of epithets, that improve the sound without carrying on the sense. But, perhaps, madam, while I thus reprehend others, you’ll think it just that I should give them an opportunity to retaliate ; and, indeed, I have made this remark only to have an opportunity of introducing to the company a ballad, which, whatever be its other defects, is, I think, at least free from those I have mentioned.”

A BALLAD.

“TURN, gentle hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale
With hospitable ray.

“For here forlorn and lost I tread,
With fainting steps and slow ;
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem lengthening as I go.”

“Forbear, my son,” the hermit cries,
To tempt the dangerous gloom ;
For yonder faithless phantom flies
To lure thee to thy doom.

“Here to the houseless child of want,
My door is open still ;
And though my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will.

“Then turn to-night, and freely share
Whate’er my cell bestows ;
My rushy couch and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose.

“No flocks that range the valley free,
To slaughter I condemn ;
Taught by that Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them.

“ But from the mountain's grassy side
A guiltless feast I bring :
A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
And water from the spring.

“ Then, pilgrim, turn ; thy cares forego ;
All earth-born cares are wrong :
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.”

Soft as the dew from heav'n descends,
His gentle accents fell :
The modest stranger lowly bends,
And follows to the cell.

Far in a wilderness obscure
The lonely mansion lay,
A refuge to the neighbouring poor,
And strangers led astray.

No stores beneath its humble thatch
Required a master's care ;
The wicket, opening with a latch,
Received the harmless pair.

And now, when busy crowds retire,
To take their evening rest,
The hermit trimm'd his little fire,
And cheer'd his pensive guest ;

And spread his vegetable store,
And gaily press'd, and smiled ;
And, skill'd in legendary lore,
The lingering hours beguiled.

Around in sympathetic mirth,
Its tricks the kitten tries ;
The cricket chirrup in the hearth ;
The crackling faggot flies.

But nothing could a charm impart
To soothe the stranger's wo :
For grief was heavy at his heart,
And tears began to flow.

His rising cares the hermit spied,
With answering care oppress'd :
“ And whence, unhappy youth,” he cried,
“ The sorrows of thy breast?

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

" From better habitations spurn'd,
Reluctant dost thou rove ?
Or grieve for friendship unreturn'd,
Or unregarded love ?

" Alas ! the joys that fortune brings
Are trifling, and decay ;
And those who prize the paltry things,
More trifling still than they.

" And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep ;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep ?

" And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair one's jest ;
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle's nest.

" For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush,
And spurn the sex !" he said :
But while he spoke, a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betray'd.

Surprised, he sees new beauties rise,
Swift mantling to the view,
Like colours o'er the morning skies :
As bright, as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast,
Alternate spread alarms :
The lovely stranger stands confess'd
A maid, in all her charms.

And, " Ah, forgive a stranger rude,
A wretch forlorn," she cried,
" Whose feet unhallow'd thus intrude
Where heav'n and you reside.

" But let a maid thy pity share,
Whom love has taught to stray ;
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair
Companion of her way.

" My father lived beside the Tyne,
A wealthy lord was he ;
And all his wealth was mark'd as mine
He had but only me.

“ To win me from his tender arms,
Unnumber'd suitors came;
Who praised me for imputed charms,
And felt or feign'd a flame.

“ Each hour a mercenary crowd
With richest proffers strove;
Among the rest young Edwin bow'd,
But never talk'd of love.

“ In humble, simplest habit clad,
Nor wealth nor power had he;
Wisdom and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me.

“ The blossom opening to the day
The dews of heav'n refined,
Could naught of purity display,
To emulate his mind.

“ The dew, the blossom on the tree,
With charms inconstant shine;
Their charms were his, but, wo to me,
Their constancy was mine!

“ For still I tried each fickle art,
Importunate and vain:
And while his passion touch'd my heart,
I triumph'd in his pain.

“ Till quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride:
And sought a solitude forlorn,
In secret, where he died.

“ But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay:
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay.

“ And there forlorn, despairing, hid,
I'll lay me down and die:
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I.”

“ Forbid it, heav'n!” the hermit cried,
And clasp'd her to his breast:—
The wondering fair one turn'd to chide:
'Twas Edwin's self that press'd!

“ Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer, turn to see
Thy own, thy long lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

“ Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And every care resign ;
And shall we never, never part,
My life—my all that’s mine !

“ No, never from this hour to part,
We’ll live and love so true ;
The sigh that rends thy constant heart,
Shall break thy Edwin’s too.”

While this ballad was reading, Sophia seemed to mix an air of tenderness with her approbation. But her tranquillity was soon disturbed by the report of a gun just by us; and immediately after, a man was seen bursting through the hedge, to take up the game he had killed. This sportsman was the squire’s chaplain, who had shot one of the blackbirds that so agreeably entertained us. So loud a report, and so near, startled my daughters; and I could perceive that Sophia, in the fright, had thrown herself into Mr. Burchell’s arms for protection. The gentleman came up, and asked pardon for having disturbed us, affirming that he was ignorant of our being so near: he therefore sat down by my youngest daughter, and, sportsman like, offered her what he had killed that morning. She was going to refuse, but a private look from her mother soon induced her to correct the mistake, and accept his present, though with some reluctance. My wife, as usual, discovered her pride in a whisper; observing that Sophia had made a conquest of the chaplain, as well as her sister had of the squire. I suspected, however, with more probability, that her affections were placed upon a different object. The chaplain’s errand was to inform us, that Mr. Thornhill had provided music and refreshments, and intended that night giving the young ladies a ball by moonlight, on the grass-plot before our door. “Nor can I deny,” continued he, “but I have an interest in being first to deliver this message, as I expect for my reward, to be honoured with Miss Sophia’s hand as a partner.”—To this my girl replied, that she should have no objection, if she could do it with honour:—“But here,” continued she, “is a gentleman,” looking at Mr. Burchell, “who has been my com-

panion in the task for the day, and it is fit he should share in its amusements." Mr. Burchell returned her a compliment for her intentions, but resigned her up to the chaplain; adding, that he was to go that night five miles, being invited to a harvest supper. His refusal appeared to me a little extraordinary; nor could I conceive how so sensible a girl as my youngest could thus prefer a man of broken fortune to one whose expectations were much greater. But as men are most capable of distinguishing merit in women, so the ladies often form the truest judgment of us. The two sexes seem placed as spies upon each other, and are furnished with different abilities, adapted for mutual inspection.

CHAPTER IX.

Two ladies of great distinction introduced.—Superior finery ever seems to confer superior breeding.

MR. BURCHELL had scarce taken leave, and Sophia consented to dance with the chaplain, when my little ones came running out to tell us, that the squire was come, with a crowd of company. Upon our return, we found our landlord with a couple of under-gentlemen and two young ladies richly dressed, whom he introduced as women of very great distinction and fashion from town. We happened not to have chairs enough for the whole company; but Mr. Thornhill immediately proposed that every gentleman should sit in a lady's lap. This I positively objected to, notwithstanding a look of disapprobation from my wife. Moses was therefore dispatched to borrow a couple of chairs; and as we were in want of ladies to make up a set at country dances, the two gentlemen went with him in quest of a couple of partners. Chairs and partners were soon provided: the gentlemen returned with my neighbour Flamborough's rosy daughters, flaunting with red topknots. But an unlucky circumstance was not adverted to: though the Miss Flamboroughs were reckoned the very best dancers in the parish, and understood the

jig and the round-about to perfection, yet they were totally unacquainted with country dances. This at first discomposed us: however, after a little shoving and dragging, they at last went merrily on. Our music consisted of two fiddles, with a pipe and tabour. The moon shone bright; Mr. Thornhill and my eldest daughter led up the ball, to the great delight of the spectators; for the neighbours hearing what was going forward, came flocking about us. My girl moved with so much grace and vivacity, that my wife could not avoid discovering the pride of her heart, by assuring me, that though the little chit did it so cleverly, all the steps were stolen from herself. The ladies of the town strove hard to be equally easy, but without success; they swam, sprawled, languished, and frisked; but all would not do: the gazers indeed owned that it was fine; but neighbour Flambo-rough observed, that Miss Livy's feet seemed as pat to the music as its echo. After the dance had continued about an hour, the two ladies, who were apprehensive of catching cold, moved to break up the ball. One of them, I thought, expressed her sentiments upon this occasion in a very coarse manner, when she observed, that by the *living jingo, she was all of a muck of sweat*. Upon our return to the house, we found a very elegant cold supper, which Mr. Thornhill had ordered to be brought with him. The conversation at this time was more reserved than before. The two ladies threw my girls quite into the shade: for they would talk of nothing but high life and high-lived company; with other fashionable topics, such as pictures, taste, Shakspeare, and the musical glasses. 'Tis true, they once or twice mortified us by slipping out an oath; but that appeared to me as the surest symptom of their distinction (though I am since informed that swearing is perfectly unfashionable). Their finery, however, threw a veil over any grossness in their conversation. My daughters seemed to regard their superior accomplishments with envy; and whatever appeared amiss was ascribed to tiptop quality breeding. But the condescension of the ladies was still superior to their other accomplishments: one of them observed, that had Miss Olivia seen a little more of the world, it would greatly improve her. To which the other added, that a single winter in town would make her little Sophia quite another thing. My wife warmly assented to both; adding, that there was nothing she more ardently wished than to give her

girls a single winter's polishing. To this I could not help replying, that their breeding was already superior to their fortune; and that greater refinement would only serve to make their poverty ridiculous, and give them a taste for pleasures they had no right to possess. "And what pleasures," cried Mr. Thornhill, "do they not deserve to possess, who have so much in their power to bestow? As for my part," continued he, "my fortune is pretty large; love, liberty, and pleasure are my maxims; but curse me, if a settlement of half my estate could give my charming Olivia pleasure, it should be hers; and the only favour I would ask in return, would be to add myself to the benefit." I was not such a stranger to the world as to be ignorant that this was the fashionable cant to disguise the insolence of the basest proposal; but I made an effort to suppress my resentment. "Sir," cried I, "the family which you now condescend to favour with your company, has been bred with as nice a sense of honour as you. Any attempts to injure that may be attended with very dangerous consequences. Honour, Sir, is our only possession at present, and of that last treasure we must be particularly careful." I was soon sorry for the warmth with which I had spoken this, when the young gentleman, grasping my hand, swore he commended my spirit, though he disapproved my suspicions. "As to your present hint," continued he, "I protest nothing was further from my heart than such a thought. No, by all that's tempting, the virtue that will stand a regular siege was never to my taste; for all my amours are carried by a *coup de main*."

The two ladies, who affected to be ignorant of the rest, seemed highly displeased with this last stroke of freedom, and began a very discreet and serious dialogue upon virtue: in this my wife, the chaplain, and I soon joined; and the squire himself was at last brought to confess a sense of sorrow for his former excesses. We talked of the pleasures of temperance, and of the sunshine in the mind unpolluted with guilt. I was so well pleased, that my little ones were kept up beyond the usual time, to be edified by so much good conversation. Mr. Thornhill even went beyond me, and demanded if I had any objection to giving prayers. I joyfully embraced the proposal, and in this manner the night was passed in a most comfortable way, till at length the company began to think of returning. The ladies seemed very

unwilling to part with my daughters, for whom they had conceived a particular affection, and joined in a request to have the pleasure of their company home. The squire seconded the proposal, and my wife added her entreaties : the girls too looked upon me as if they wished to go. In this perplexity I made two or three excuses, which my daughters as readily removed ; so that at last I was obliged to give a peremptory refusal : for which we had nothing but sullen looks and short answers the whole day ensuing.

CHAPTER X.

The family endeavour to cope with their betters.—The miseries of the poor when they attempt to appear above their circumstances.

I NOW began to find that all my long and painful lectures upon temperance, simplicity, and contentment, were entirely disregarded. The distinctions lately paid us by our betters awakened that pride which I had laid asleep, but not removed. Our windows again, as formerly, were filled with washes for the neck and face : the sun was dreaded as an enemy to the skin without doors, and the fire as a spoiler of the complexion within. My wife observed, that rising too early would hurt her daughters' eyes, that working after dinner would redden their noses, and she convinced me that the hands never looked so white as when they did nothing. Instead, therefore, of finishing George's shirts, we now had them new-modelling their old gauzes, or flourishing upon catgut. The poor Miss Flamboroughs, their former gay companions, were cast off as mean acquaintance, and the whole conversation ran upon high life, and high-lived company, with pictures, taste, Shakspeare, and the musical glasses.

But we could have borne all this, had not a fortune-telling gipsy come to raise us into perfect sublimity. The tawny sybil no sooner appeared, than my girls came running to me for a shilling a piece to cross her hand with silver. To say the truth, I was tired of being always wise, and could not help gratifying

their request, because I loved to see them happy. I gave each of them a shilling; though, for the honour of the family, it must be observed, that they never went without money themselves, as my wife always generously let them have a guinea each, to keep in their pockets; but with strict injunctions never to change it. After they had been closeted up with the fortune-teller for some time, I knew by their looks upon their returning that they had been promised something great. "Well, my girls, how have you sped! Tell me, Livy, has the fortune-teller given thee a pennyworth?"—"I protest, papa," says the girl, "I believe she deals with somebody that's not right; for she positively declared, that I am to be married to a squire in less than a twelvemonth!"—"Well, now, Sophy, my child," said I, "and what sort of a husband are you to have?"—"Sir," replied she, "I am to have a lord soon after my sister has married the squire."—"How," cried I, "is that all you are to have for your two shillings? Only a lord and a squire for two shillings! You fools, I could have promised you a prince and a nabob for half the money."

This curiosity of theirs, however, was attended with very serious effects; we now began to think ourselves designed by the stars to something exalted, and already anticipated our future grandeur.

It has been a thousand times observed, and I must observe it once more, that the hours we pass with happy prospects in view, are more pleasing than those crowned with fruition. In the first case, we cook the dish to our own appetite; in the latter, nature cooks it for us. It is impossible to repeat the train of agreeable reveries we called up for our entertainment. We looked upon our fortunes as once more rising; and as the whole parish asserted that the squire was in love with my daughter, she was actually so with him; for they persuaded her into the passion. In this agreeable interval, my wife had the most lucky dreams in the world, which she took care to tell us every morning, with great solemnity and exactness. It was one night a coffin and cross-bones, the sign of an approaching wedding: at another time she imagined her daughter's pockets filled with farthings, a certain sign they would shortly be stuffed with gold. The girls themselves had their omens: they felt strange kisses on their lips; they saw rings in the candle, purses bounced from the fire, and true love-knots lurked in the bottom of every tea-cup.

Towards the end of the week we received a card from the town ladies; in which, with their compliments, they hoped to see all our family at church the Sunday following. All Saturday morning I could perceive, in consequence of this, my wife and daughters in close conference together, and now and then glancing at me with looks that betrayed a latent plot. To be sincere, I had strong suspicions that some absurd proposal was preparing for appearing with splendour the next day. In the evening they began their operations in a very regular manner, and my wife undertook to conduct the siege. After tea, when I seemed in spirits, she began thus: "I fancy, Charles, my dear, we shall have a great deal of good company at our church to-morrow."—"Perhaps we may, my dear," returned I; "though you need be under no uneasiness about that; you shall have a sermon whether there be or not." "That is what I expect," returned she: "but I think, my dear, we ought to appear there as decently as possible, for who knows what may happen?"—"Your precautions," replied I, "are highly commendable. A decent behaviour and appearance at church is what charms me. We should be devout and humble, cheerful and serene."—"Yes," cried she, "I know that; but I mean we should go there in as proper a manner as possible; not altogether like the scrubs about us." "You are quite right, my dear," returned I; "and I was going to make the very same proposal. The proper manner of going is to go there as early as possible, to have time for meditation before the service begins."—"Phoo, Charles," interrupted she, "all that is very true; but not what I would be at. I mean, we should go there genteelly. You know the church is two miles off, and I protest I don't like to see my daughters trudging up to their pew all blowzed and red with walking, and looking for all the world as if they had been winners at a smock race. Now, my dear, my proposal is this: there are our two plough horses, the colt that has been in our family these nine years, and his companion Blackberry, that has scarce done an earthly thing for this month past. They are both grown fat and lazy. Why should they not do something as well as we? And let me tell you, when Moses has trimmed them a little, they will cut a very tolerable figure."

To this proposal I objected, that walking would be twenty times more genteel than such a paltry conveyance, as Black-

berry was wall-eyed, and the colt wanted a tail: that they had never been broke to the rein, but had a hundred vicious tricks; and that we had but one saddle and pillion in the whole house. All these objections, however, were overruled; so that I was obliged to comply. The next morning I perceived them not a little busy in collecting such materials as might be necessary for the expedition; but as I found it would be a business of time, I walked on to the church before and they promised speedily to follow. I waited near an hour in the reading desk for their arrival; but not finding them come as expected, I was obliged to begin, and went through the service, not without some uneasiness at finding them absent. This was increased when all was finished and no appearance of the family. I therefore walked back by the horseway, which was five miles round, though the footway was but two; and when got about halfway home, perceived the procession marching slowly forward towards the church—my son, my wife, and the two little ones exalted upon one horse, and my two daughters on the other. I demanded the cause of their delay; but I soon found by their looks they had met with a thousand misfortunes on the road. The horses had at first refused to move from the door, till Mr. Burehell was kind enough to beat them forward for about two hundred yards with his cudgel. Next, the straps of my wife's pillion broke down, and they were obliged to stop to repair them before they could proceed. After that, one of the horses took it into his head to stand still, and neither blows nor entreaties could prevail with him to proceed. It was just recovering from this dismal situation that I found them; but perceiving every thing safe, I own their present mortification did not much displease me, as it would give me many opportunities of future triumph, and teach my daughters more humility.

CHAPTER XI.

The family still resolve to hold up their heads.

MICHAELMAS eve happening on the next day, we were invited to burn nuts and play tricks at neighbour Flamborough's. Our late mortifications had humbled us a little, or it is probable we might have rejected such an invitation with contempt: however, we suffered ourselves to be happy. Our honest neighbour's goose and dumplings were fine, and the lamb's wool, even in the opinion of my wife, who was a connoisseur, was excellent. It is true, his manner of telling stories was not quite so well: they were very long, and very dull, and all about himself, and we had laughed at them ten times before: however, we were kind enough to laugh at them once more.

Mr. Burchell, who was of the party, was always fond of seeing some innocent amusement going forward, and set the boys and girls to blindman's buff. My wife too was persuaded to join in the diversion, and it gave me pleasure to think she was not yet too old. In the mean time, my neighbour and I looked on, laughed at every feat, and praised our own dexterity when we were young. Hot-cockles succeeded next, questions and commands followed that, and last of all they sat down to hunt the slipper. As every person may not be acquainted with this primeval pastime, it may be necessary to observe, that the company at this play plant themselves in a ring upon the ground, all except one, who stands in the middle, whose business is to catch a shoe, which the company shove about under their hams from one to another, something like a weaver's shuttle. As it is impossible, in this case, for the lady who is up to face all the company at once, the great beauty of the play lies in hitting her a thump with the heel of the shoe on that side least capable of making defence. It was in this manner that my eldest daughter was hemmed in and thumped about, all blowzed, in spirits, and

bawling for fair play, with a voice that might deafen a ballad-singer, when, confusion on confusion, who should enter the room but our two great acquaintances from town, Lady Blarney, and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs! Description would but beggar, therefore it is unnecessary to describe this new mortification. Death! to be seen by ladies of such high breeding in such vulgar attitudes! Nothing better could ensue from such a vulgar play of Mr. Flamborough's proposing. We seemed struck to the ground for some time, as if actually petrified with amazement.

The two ladies had been at our house to see us, and finding us from home, came after us hither, as they were uneasy to know what accident could have kept us from church the day before. Olivia undertook to be our prolocutor, and delivered the whole in a summary way, only saying, "We were thrown from our horses." At which account the ladies were greatly concerned; but being told the family received no hurt, they were extremely glad: but being informed that we were almost killed by the fright, they were vastly sorry; but hearing that we had a very good night, they were extremely glad again. Nothing could exceed their complaisance to my daughters; their professions the last evening were warm, but now they were ardent. They protested a desire of more lasting acquaintance. Lady Blarney was particularly attached to Olivia; Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs (I love to give the whole name) took a greater fancy to her sister. They supported the conversation between themselves, while my daughters sat silent, admiring their exalted breeding. But as every reader, however beggarly himself, is fond of high-lived dialogues, with anecdotes of lords, ladies, and knights of the garter, I must beg leave to give him the concluding part of the present conversation.

"All that I know of the matter," cried Miss Skeggs, "is this, that it may be true, or it may not be true: but this I can assure your ladyship, that the whole rout was in amaze; his lordship turned all manner of colours, my lady fell into a swoon; but Sir Tomkyn, drawing his sword, swore he was hers to the last drop of his blood."

"Well," replied our peeress, "this I can say, that the duchess never told me a syllable of the matter, and I believe her grace would keep nothing a secret from me. This you may depend on as

a fact, that the next morning my lord duke cried out three times to his valet-de-chambre, Jernigan! Jernigan! Jernigan! bring me my garters."

But previously I should have mentioned the very impolite behaviour of Mr. Burchell; who, during this discourse, sat with his face turned to the fire, and at the conclusion of every sentence would cry out *fudge!*—an expression which displeased us all, and in some measure damped the rising spirit of the conversation.

"Besides, my dear Skeggs," continued our peeress, "there is nothing of this in the copy of verses that Dr. Burdock made upon the occasion."—*Fudge!*

"I am surprised at that," cried Miss Skeggs, "for he seldom leaves any thing out, as he writes only for his own amusement. But can your ladyship favour me with a sight of them?"—*Fudge!*

"My dear creatures," replied our peeress, "do you think I carry such things about me? Though they are very fine, to be sure, and I think myself something of a judge; at least, I know what pleases myself. Indeed I was ever an admirer of all Dr. Burdock's little pieces; for except what he does, and our dear countess at Hanover-square, there's nothing comes out but the most lowest stuff in nature; not a bit of high-life among them."—*Fudge!*

"Your ladyship should except," says the other, "your own things in the Lady's Magazine. I hope you'll say there's nothing low-lived there? But I suppose we are to have no more from that quarter?"—*Fudge!*

"Why, my dear," says the lady, "you know my reader and companion has left me to be married to Captain Roach, and as my poor eyes won't suffer me to write myself, I have been for some time looking out for another. A proper person is no easy matter to find; and to be sure thirty pounds a year is a small stipend for a well-bred girl of character, that can read, write, and behave in company: as for the chits about town, there is no bearing them about one."—*Fudge!*

"That I know," cried Miss Skeggs, "by experience. For of the three companions I had this last half year, one of them refused to do plain-work an hour in the day, another thought twenty-five guineas a year too small a salary, and I was obliged

to send away the third, because I suspected an intrigue with the chaplain. Virtue, my dear Lady Blarney, virtue is worth any price; but where is that to be found?"—*Fudge!*

My wife had been for a long time all attention to this discourse; but was particularly struck with the latter part of it. Thirty pounds and twenty-five guineas a year made fifty-six pounds five shillings English money; all which was in a manner going a begging, and might easily be secured in the family. She for a moment studied my looks for approbation; and, to own a truth, I was of opinion that two such places would fit our two daughters exactly. Besides, if the squire had any real affection for my eldest daughter, this would be the way to make her every way qualified for her fortune. My wife, therefore, was resolved that we should not be deprived of such advantages for want of assurance, and undertook to harangue for the family. "I hope," cried she, "your ladyship will pardon my present presumption. It is true, we have no right to pretend to such favours; but yet it is natural for me to wish putting my children forward in the world; and I will be bold to say, my two girls have had a pretty good education and capacity; at least, the country can't show better. They read, write, and cast accounts; they understand their needle, broad-stitch, cross and change, and all manner of plain-work; they can pink, point, and frill; and know something of music; they can do up small clothes, and work upon catgut; my eldest can cut paper, and my youngest has a very pretty manner of telling fortunes upon the cards."—*Fudge!*

When she had delivered this pretty piece of eloquence, the two ladies looked at each other a few minutes in silence, with an air of doubt and importance. At last, Miss Carolina Wilemina Amelia Skeggs condescended to observe, that the young ladies, from the opinion she could form of them from so slight an acquaintance, seemed very fit for such employments: "But a thing of this kind, Madam," cried she, addressing my spouse, "requires a thorough examination into characters, and a more perfect knowledge of each other. Not, Madam," continued she, "that I in the least suspect the young ladies' virtue, prudence, and discretion; but there is a form in these things, Madam, there is a form."—*Fudge!*

My wife approved her suspicions very much, observing that

she was very apt to be suspicious herself, but referred her to all the neighbours for a character : but this our peeress declined as unnecessary, alleging that her cousin Thornhill's recommendation would be sufficient, and upon this we rested our petition.

CHAPTER XII

Fortune seems resolved to humble the family of Wakefield.—Mortifications are often more painful than real calamities.

WHEN we were returned home, the night was dedicated to schemes of future conquest. Deborah exerted much sagacity in conjecturing which of the two girls was likely to have the best place, and most opportunities of seeing good company. The only obstacle to our preferment was in obtaining the squire's recommendation ; but he had already shown us too many instances of his friendship to doubt of it now. Even in bed my wife kept up the usual theme : " Well, faith, my dear Charles, between ourselves, I think we have made an excellent day's work of it."—" Pretty well," cried I, not knowing what to say. —" What, only pretty well ?" returned she. " I think it is very well. Suppose the girls should come to make acquaintances of taste in town ! This I am assured of, that London is the only place in the world for all manner of husbands. Besides, my dear, stranger things happen every day : and as ladies of quality are so taken with my daughters, what will not men of quality be ? *Entre nous*, I protest I like my Lady Blarney vastly ; so very obliging. However, Miss Carolina Wilelmina Amelia Skeggs has my warm heart. But yet, when they came to talk of places in town, you saw at once how I nailed them. Tell me, my dear, don't you think I did for my children there ?"—" Ay," returned I, not knowing well what to think of the matter, " heaven grant they may be both the better for it this day three months !" This was one of those observations I usually made

to impress my wife with an opinion of my sagacity; for if the girls succeeded, then it was a pious wish fulfilled; but if any thing unfortunate ensued, then it might be looked upon as a prophecy. All this conversation, however, was only preparatory to another scheme, and indeed I dreaded as much. This was nothing less than, that, as we were now to hold up our heads a little higher in the world, it would be proper to sell the colt, which was now grown old, at a neighbouring fair, and buy us a horse that would carry single or double upon an occasion, and make a pretty appearance at church or upon a visit. This at first I opposed stoutly; but it was as stoutly defended. However, as I weakened, my antagonists gained strength, till at last it was resolved to part with him.

As the fair happened on the following day, I had intentions of going myself; but my wife persuaded me that I had got a cold, and nothing could prevail upon her to permit me from home. "No, my dear," said she, "our son Moses is a discreet boy, and can buy and sell to very good advantage; you know all our great bargains are of his purchasing. He always stands out and higgles, and actually tires them till he gets a bargain."

As I had some opinion of my son's prudence, I was willing enough to entrust him with this commission; and the next morning I perceived his sisters mighty busy in fitting out Moses for the fair: trimming his hair, brushing his buckles, and cocking his hat with pins. The business of the toilette being over, we had at last the satisfaction of seeing him mounted upon the colt, with a deal box before him to bring home groceries in. He had on a coat made of that cloth they call thunder and lightning, which, though grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was of a gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad black riband. We all followed him several paces from the door, bawling after him, "Good luck! good luck!" till we could see him no longer.

He was scarcely gone, when Mr. Thornhill's butler came to congratulate us upon our good fortune, saying that he overheard his young master mention our names with great commendation.—Good fortune seemed resolved not to come alone. Another footman from the same family followed, with a card for my daughters, importing, that the two ladies had received such pleasing accounts from Mr. Thornhill of us all, that after a few

previous inquiries, they hoped to be perfectly satisfied. "Ay," cried my wife, "I now see it is no easy matter to get into the families of the great; but when one once gets in, then, as Moses says, one may go to sleep." To this piece of humour, for she intended it for wit, my daughters assented with a loud laugh of pleasure. In short, such was her satisfaction at this message, that she actually put her hand in her pocket and gave the messenger seven-pence halfpenny.

This was to be our visiting day. The next that came was Mr. Burchell, who had been at the fair. He brought my little ones a pennyworth of gingerbread each, which my wife undertook to keep for them, and give them by letters at a time. He brought my daughters also a couple of boxes, in which they might keep wafers, snuff, patches, or even money, when they got it. My wife was usually fond of a weazel-skin purse, as being the most lucky; but this by the by. We had still a regard for Mr. Burchell, though his late rude behaviour was in some measure displeasing; nor could we now avoid communicating our happiness to him, and asking his advice: although we seldom followed advice, we were all ready enough to ask it. When he read the note from the two ladies, he shook his head, and observed that an affair of this sort demanded the utmost circumspection.—This air of diffidence highly displeased my wife. "I never doubted, Sir," cried she, "your readiness to be against my daughters and me. You have more circumspection than is wanted. However, I fancy, when we come to ask advice, we shall apply to persons who seem to have made use of it themselves."—"Whatever my own conduct may have been, Madam," replied he, "is not the present question; though, as I have made no use of advice myself, I should in conscience give it to those that will." As I was apprehensive this answer might draw on a repartee, making up by abuse what it wanted in wit, I changed the subject, by seeming to wonder what could keep our son so long at the fair, as it was now almost nightfall.—"Never mind our son," cried my wife, "depend upon it he knows what he is about. I'll warrant we'll never see him sell his hen on a rainy day. I have seen him buy such bargains as would amaze one. I'll tell you a good story about that, that will make you split your sides with laughing. But as I live, yonder comes Moses, without a horse, and the box at his back."

As she spoke, Moses came slowly on foot, and sweating under the deal box, which he had strapped round his shoulders like a pedlar. "Welcome! welcome, Moses! well, my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?"—"I have brought you myself," cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser.—"Ay, Moses," cried my wife, "that we know, but where is the horse?"—"I have sold him," cried Moses, "for three pounds five shillings and two-pence."—"Well done, my good boy," returned she, "I knew you would touch them off. Between ourselves, three pounds five shillings and two-pence is no bad day's work. Come, let us have it, then."—"I have brought back no money," cried Moses again.—"I have laid it all out in a bargain; and here it is!" pulling out a bundle from his breast. "Here they are! a gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and chagreen cases."—"A gross of green spectacles!" repeated my wife in a faint voice. "And you have parted with the colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of green paltry spectacles!"—"Dear mother," cried the boy, "why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money."—"A fig for the silver rims," cried my wife in a passion: I dare swear they won't sell for above half the money, at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce."—"You need be under no uneasiness," cried I, "about selling the rims; for they are not worth sixpence; for I perceive they are only copper varnished over."—"What," cried my wife, "not silver! the rims not silver!" "No," cried I, "no more silver than your saucepan."—"And so," returned she, "we have parted with the colt, and have only got a gross of green spectacles, with copper rims and chagreen cases! A murrain take such trumpery! The blockhead has been imposed upon, and should have known his company better."—"There, my dear," cried I, "you are wrong; he should not have known them at all."—"Marry, hang the idiot!" returned she, "to bring me such stuff; if I had them, I would throw them on the fire."—"There again you are wrong, my dear," cried I; "for though they be copper, we will keep them by us; as copper spectacles, you know, are better than nothing."

By this time the unfortunate Moses was undeceived. He now saw that he had indeed been imposed upon by a prowling shar-

per, who, observing his figure, had marked him for an easy prey. I therefore asked him the circumstances of his deception. He sold the horse, it seems, and walked the fair in search of another. A reverend looking man brought him to a tent, under pretence of having one to sell. "Here," continued Moses, "we met another man, very well dressed, who desired to borrow twenty pounds upon these, saying that he wanted money, and would dispose of them for a third of the value. The first gentleman, who pretended to be my friend, whispered me to buy them, and cautioned me not to let so good an offer pass. I sent for Mr. Flamborough, and they talked him up as finely as they did me, and so at last we were persuaded to buy the two gross between us."

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Burchell is found to be an enemy; for he has the confidence to give disagreeable advice.

OUR family had now made several attempts to be fine; but some unforeseen disaster demolished each as soon as projected. I endeavoured to take the advantage of every disappointment, to improve their good sense in proportion as they were frustrated in ambition. "You see, my children," cried I, "how little is to be got by attempts to impose upon the world, in coping with our betters. Such as are poor, and will associate with none but the rich, are hated by those they avoid, and despised by those they follow. Unequal combinations are always disadvantageous to the weaker side: the rich having the pleasure, and the poor the inconveniences that result from them. But come, Dick, my boy, and repeat the fable you were reading to-day, for the good of the company."

"Once upon a time," cried the child, "a giant and a dwarf were friends, and kept together. They made a bargain that they would never forsake each other, but go seek adventures.

The first battle they fought was with two Saracens, and the dwarf, who was very courageous, dealt one of the champions a most angry blow. It did the Saracen very little injury, who, lifting up his sword, fairly struck off the poor dwarf's arm. He was now in a woful plight; but the giant coming to his assistance, in a short time left the two Saracens dead on the plain, and the dwarf cut off the dead man's head out of spite. They then travelled on to another adventure. This was against three bloody-minded satyrs, who were carrying away a damsel in distress. The dwarf was not quite so fierce now as before, but for all that, struck the first blow, which was returned by another that knocked out his eye: but the giant was soon up with them, and had they not fled, would certainly have killed them every one. They were all very joyful for this victory, and the damsel who was relieved fell in love with the giant, and married him. They now travelled far, and farther than I can tell, till they met with a company of robbers. The giant, for the first time, was foremost now; but the dwarf was not far behind. The battle was stout and long. Wherever the giant came, all fell before him; but the dwarf had like to have been killed more than once. At last, the victory declared for the two adventurers; but the dwarf lost his leg. The dwarf had now lost an arm, a leg, and an eye, while the giant was without a single wound: upon which he cried out to his little companion,—“My little hero, this is glorious sport; let us get one victory more, and then we shall have honour for ever.”—“No,” cries the dwarf, who was by this time grown wiser; “no, I declare off; I'll fight no more: for I find in every battle, that you get all the honour and rewards, but all the blows fall upon me.”

I was going to moralize upon this fable, when our attention was called off to a warm dispute between my wife and Mr. Burchell, upon my daughters' intended expedition to town. My wife very strenuously insisted upon the advantages that would result from it. Mr. Burchell, on the contrary, dissuaded her with great ardour, and I stood neuter. His present dissuasions seemed but the second part of those which were received with so ill a grace in the morning. The dispute grew high, while poor Deborah, instead of reasoning stronger, talked louder, and at last was obliged to take shelter from a defeat in clamour. The conclu-

sion of her harangue, however, was highly displeasing to us all: "she knew," she said, "of some who had their secret reasons for what they advised; but for her part, she wished such to stay away from her house for the future." "Madam," cried Mr. Burchell, with looks of great composure, which tended to enflame her the more, "as for secret reasons, you are right: I have secret reasons, which I forbear to mention, because you are not able to answer those of which I make no secret: but I find my visits here are become troublesome; I'll take my leave, therefore, now, and perhaps come once more to take a final farewell, when I am quitting the country." Thus saying, he took up his hat, nor could the attempts of Sophia, whose looks seemed to upbraid his precipitancy, prevent his going.

When gone, we all regarded each other for some minutes with confusion. My wife, who knew herself to be the cause, strove to hide her concern with a forced smile and an air of assurance, which I was willing to reprove: "How, woman!" cried I to her, "is it thus we treat strangers? Is it thus we return their kindness? Be assured, my dear, that these were the harshest words, and to me the most displeasing, that ever escaped your lips."—"Why would he provoke me, then?" replied she; "but I know the motives of his advice perfectly well. He would prevent my girls from going to town, that he may have the pleasure of my youngest daughter's company here at home. But, whatever happens, she shall choose better company than such low-lived fellows as he."—"Low-lived! my dear, do you call him?" cried I. "It is very possible we may mistake this man's character: for he seems, upon some occasions, the most finished gentleman I ever knew. Tell me, Sophia, my girl, has he ever given you any secret instances of his attachment?"—"His conversation with me, Sir," replied my daughter, "has ever been sensible, modest, and pleasing. As to aught else, no, never. Once, indeed, I remember to have heard him say, he never knew a woman who could find merit in a man that seemed poor."—"Such, my dear," cried I, "is the common cant of all the unfortunate or idle. But I hope you have been taught to judge properly of such men, and that it would be even madness to expect happiness from one who has been so very bad an economist of his own. Your mother and I

have now better prospects for you. The next winter, which you will probably spend in town, will give you opportunities of making a more prudent choice."

What Sophia's reflections were upon this occasion, I cannot pretend to determine; but I was not displeased at the bottom that we were rid of a guest from whom I had much to fear. Our breach of hospitality went to my conscience a little: but I quickly silenced that monitor by two or three specious reasons, which served to satisfy and reconcile me to myself. The pain which conscience gives the man who has already done wrong, is soon got over. Conscience is a coward, and those faults it has not strength enough to prevent, it seldom has justice enough to accuse.

CHAPTER XIV.

Fresh mortifications, or a demonstration that seeming calamities may be real blessings.

THE journey of my daughters to town was now resolved upon, Mr. Thornhill having kindly promised to inspect their conduct himself, and inform us by letter of their behaviour. But it was thought indispensably necessary that their appearance should equal the greatness of their expectations, which could not be done without expense. We debated, therefore, in full council, what were the easiest methods of raising money, or, more properly speaking, what we could most conveniently sell. The deliberation was soon finished; it was found that our remaining horse was utterly useless for the plough without his companion, and equally unfit for the road, as wanting an eye; it was therefore determined that we should dispose of him for the purpose above-mentioned, at the neighbouring fair, and, to prevent imposition, that I should go with him myself. Though this was one of the first mercantile transactions of my life, yet I had no doubt about acquitting myself with reputation. The opinion a man

forms of his own prudence is measured by that of the company he keeps; and as mine was mostly in the family way, I had conceived no unfavourable sentiments of my worldly wisdom. My wife, however, next morning, at parting, after I had got some paces from the door, called me back to advise me, in a whisper, to have all my eyes about me.

I had, in the usual forms, when I came to the fair, put my horse through all his paces, but for some time had no bidders. At last a chapman approached, and, after he had for a good while examined the horse round, finding him blind of one eye, he would have nothing to say to him; a second came up, but observing he had a spavin, declared he would not take him for the driving home; a third perceived he had a windgall, and would bid no money; a fourth knew by his eye that he had the bots; a fifth wondered what a plague I could do at the fair with the blind, spavined, galled hack, that was only fit to be cut up for a dog-kennel. By this time I began to have a most hearty contempt for the poor animal myself, and was almost ashamed at the approach of every customer; for though I did not entirely believe all the fellows told me, yet I reflected that the number of witnesses was a strong presumption they were right, and St. Gregory, upon good works, professes himself to be of the same opinion.

I was in this mortifying situation, when a brother clergyman, an old acquaintance, who had also business in the fair, came up, and shaking me by the hand, proposed adjourning to a public-house, and taking a glass of whatever we could get. I readily closed with the offer, and entering an ale-house, we were shown into a little back room, where there was only a venerable old man, who sat wholly intent over a large book, which he was reading. I never in my life saw a figure that prepossessed me more favourably. His locks of silver gray venerably shaded his temples, and his green old age seemed to be the result of health and benevolence. However, his presence did not interrupt our conversation; my friend and I discoursed on the various turns of fortune we had met: the Whistonian controversy, my last pamphlet, the archdeacon's reply, and the hard measure that was dealt me. But our attention was in a short time taken off by the appearance of a youth, who, entering the room, respectfully said something softly to the old stranger. "Make

no apologies, my child," said the old man: "to do good is a duty we owe to all our fellow-creatures; take this, I wish it were more; but five pounds will relieve your distress, and you are welcome." The modest youth shed tears of gratitude, and yet his gratitude was scarce equal to mine. I could have hugged the good old man in my arms, his benevolence pleased me so. He continued to read, and we resumed our conversation, until my companion, after some time, recollecting that he had business to transact in the fair, promised to be soon back; adding, that he always desired to have as much of Dr. Primrose's company as possible. The old gentleman, hearing my name mentioned, seemed to look at me with attention, for some time; and when my friend was gone, most respectfully demanded if I was any way related to the great Primrose, that courageous monogamist, who had been the bulwark of the church. Never did my heart feel sincerer rapture than at that moment. "Sir," cried I, "the applause of so good a man, as I am sure you are, adds to that happiness in my breast which your benevolence has already excited. You behold before you, Sir, that Doctor Primrose, the monogamist, whom you have been pleased to call great. You here see that unfortunate divine, who has so long, and it would ill become me to say successfully, fought against the deuterogamy of the age." "Sir," cried the stranger, struck with awe, "I fear I have been too familiar; but you'll forgive my curiosity, Sir: I beg pardon." "Sir," cried I, grasping his hand, "you are so far from displeasing me by your familiarity, that I must beg you'll accept my friendship, as you already have my esteem."—"Then with gratitude I accept the offer," cried he, squeezing me by the hand, "thou glorious pillar of unshaken orthodoxy; and do I behold—" I here interrupted what he was going to say; for though, as an author, I could digest no small share of flattery, yet now my modesty would permit no more. However, no lovers in romance ever cemented a more instantaneous friendship. We talked upon several subjects: at first, I thought he seemed rather devout than learned, and began to think he despised all human doctrines as dross. Yet this no way lessened him in my esteem: for I had for some time begun privately to harbour such an opinion myself. I therefore took occasion to observe, that the world in general began to be blameably indifferent as to doctrinal matters, and followed human speculations

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too much.—“Ay, Sir,” replied he, as if he had reserved all his learning to that moment; “Ay, Sir, the world is in its dotage, and yet the cosmogony or creation of the world has puzzled philosophers of all ages. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world? Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus have all attempted it in vain. The latter has these words: *Anarchon ara kai atelutaion to pan*; which imply, that all things have neither beginning nor end. Manetho, also, who lived about the time of Nebuchadon-Asser, Asser being a Syriac word usually applied as a surname to the kings of that country, as Teglat Phael-Asser, Nahon-Asser;—he, I say, formed a conjecture equally absurd; for as we usually say, *ek to biblion kubernetes*, which implies that books will never teach the world; so he attempted to investigate—But, Sir, I ask pardon, I am straying from the question.”—That he actually was; nor could I for my life see how the creation of the world had any thing to do with the business I was talking of; but it was sufficient to show me that he was a man of letters, and I now revered him the more. I was resolved, therefore, to bring him to the touchstone; but he was too mild and too gentle to contend for victory. Whenever I made any observation that looked like a challenge to controversy, he would smile, shake his head, and say nothing; by which I understood he could say much if he thought proper. The subject, therefore, insensibly changed from the business of antiquity to that which brought us both to the fair: mine, I told him, was to sell a horse; and very luckily, indeed, his was to buy one for one of his tenants. My horse was soon produced, and in fine we struck a bargain. Nothing now remained but to pay me, and he accordingly pulled out a thirty pound note, and bid me change it. Not being in a capacity of complying with his demand, he ordered his footman to be called up, who made his appearance in a very genteel livery. “Here, Abraham,” cried he, “go and get gold for this; you’ll do it at neighbour Jackson’s, or any where.” While the fellow was gone, he entertained me with a pathetic harangue on the great scarcity of silver, which I undertook to improve, by deploring also the great scarcity of gold; so that by the time Abraham returned, we had both agreed that money was never so hard to be come at as now. Abraham returned to inform us, that he had

been over the whole fair and could not get change, though he had offered half a crown for doing it. This was a very great disappointment to us all ; but the old gentleman having paused a little, asked me if I knew one Solomon Flamberough in my part of the country : upon replying that he was my next door neighbour, " If that be the case, then," returned he, " I believe we shall deal. You shall have a draught upon him, payable at sight ; and let me tell you, he is as warm a man as any within five miles round him. Honest Solomon and I have been acquainted for many years together. I remember I always beat him at three jumps ; but he could hop upon one leg further than I." A draught upon my neighbour was to me the same as money ; for I was sufficiently convinced of his ability : the draught was signed and put into my hands, and Mr. Jenkinson, the old gentleman, his man Abraham, and my horse old Blackberry, trotted off very well pleased with each other.

After a short interval, being left to reflection, I began to recollect that I had done wrong in taking a draught from a stranger, and so prudently resolved upon following the purchaser, and having back my horse. But this was now too late : I therefore made directly homewards, resolving to get the draught changed into money at my friend's as fast as possible. I found my honest neighbour smoking his pipe at his own door ; and informing him that I had a small bill upon him, he read it twice over. " You can read the name, I suppose," cried I ; " Ephraim Jenkinson."—" Yes," returned he, " the name is written plain enough, and I know the gentleman too, the greatest rascal under the canopy of heaven. This is the very same rogue who sold us the spectacles. Was he not a venerable looking man, with grey hair, and no flaps to his pocket-holes ? And did he not talk a long string of learning, about Greek, and cosmogony, and the world ?" To this I replied with a groan. " Ay," continued he, " he has but that one piece of learning in the world, and he always talks it whenever he finds a scholar in company ; but I know the rogue, and will catch him yet."

Though I was already sufficiently mortified, my greatest struggle was to come, in facing my wife and daughters. No tenant was ever more afraid of returning to school, there to behold the master's visage, than I was of going home. I was

determined, however, to anticipate their fury, by first falling into a passion myself.

But, alas! upon entering, I found the family no way disposed for battle. My wife and girls were all in tears, Mr. Thornhill having been there that day to inform them that their journey to town was entirely over. The two ladies, having heard reports of us from some malicious person about us, were that day set out for London. He could neither discover the tendency, nor the author of these; but whatever they might be, or whoever might have broached them, he continued to assure our family of his friendship and protection. I found, therefore, that they bore my disappointment with great resignation, as it was eclipsed in the greatness of their own. But what perplexed us most was, to think who could be so base as to asperse the character of a family so harmless as ours—too humble to excite envy, and too inoffensive to create disgust.

CHAPTER XV.

All Mr. Burchell's villany at once detected. The folly of being over-wise.

THAT evening, and a part of the following day, was employed in fruitless attempts to discover our enemies: scarce a family in the neighbourhood but incurred our suspicions, and each of us had reasons for our opinions best known to ourselves. As we were in this perplexity, one of our little boys, who had been playing abroad, brought in a letter-case, which he found on the green. It was quickly known to belong to Mr. Burchell, with whom it had been seen, and, upon examination, it contained some hints upon different subjects; but what particularly engaged our attention, was a sealed note, superscribed, *the copy of a letter to be sent to the ladies at Thornhill Castle*. It instantly occurred that he was the base informer, and we deliberated whether the note should not be broke open. I was

against it; but Sophia, who said she was sure that of all men he would be the last to be guilty of so much baseness, insisted upon its being read. In this she was seconded by the rest of the family, and, at their joint solicitation, I read as follows:

“LADIES,

“THE bearer will sufficiently satisfy you as to the person from whom this comes: one at least the friend of innocence, and ready to prevent its being seduced. I am informed, for a truth, that you have some intention of bringing two young ladies to town, whom I have some knowledge of, under the character of companions. As I would neither have simplicity imposed upon, nor virtue contaminated, I must offer it as my opinion, that the impropriety of such a step will be attended with dangerous consequences. It has never been my way to treat the infamous or the lewd with severity; nor should I now have taken this method of explaining myself, or reproving folly, did it not aim at guilt. Take, therefore, the admonition of a friend, and seriously reflect on the consequences of introducing infamy and vice into retreats where peace and innocence have hitherto resided.”

Our doubts were now at an end. There seemed, indeed, something applicable to both sides in this letter; and its censures might as well be referred to those to whom it was written, as to us; but the malicious meaning was obvious, and we went no further. My wife had scarcely patience to hear me to the end, but railed at the writer with unrestrained resentment. Olivia was equally severe, and Sophia seemed perfectly amazed at his baseness. As for my part, it appeared to me one of the vilest instances of unprovoked ingratitude I had ever met with: nor could I account for it in any other manner, than by imputing it to his desire of detaining my youngest daughter in the country, to have the more frequent opportunities of an interview. In this manner, we all sat ruminating upon schemes of vengeance, when our other little boy came running in to tell us that Mr. Burchell was approaching at the other end of the field. It is easier to conceive than describe the complicated sensations which are felt from the pain of a recent injury, and the pleasure of approaching vengeance. Though our intentions were only to

upbraid him with his ingratitude, yet it was resolved to do it in a manner that would be perfectly cutting. For this purpose we agreed to meet him with our usual smiles, to chat in the beginning with more than ordinary kindness, to amuse him a little; and then, in the midst of the flattering calm, to burst upon him like an earthquake, and overwhelm him with the sense of his own baseness. This being resolved upon, my wife undertook to manage the business herself, as she really had some talents for such an undertaking. We saw him approach; he entered, drew a chair, and sat down. "A fine day, Mr. Burchell."—"A very fine day, Doctor; though I fancy we shall have some rain, by the shooting of my corns."—"The shooting of your horns," cried my wife, in a loud fit of laughter, and then asked pardon for being fond of a joke.—"Dear Madam," replied he, "I pardon you with all my heart; for I protest I should not have thought it a joke, had you not told me."—"Perhaps not, Sir," cried my wife, winking at us, "and yet I dare say you can tell us how many jokes go to an ounce."—"I fancy, Madam," returned Mr. Burchell, "you have been reading a jest book this morning, that ounce of jokes is so very good a conceit; and yet, Madam, I had rather see half an ounce of understanding."—"I believe you might," cried my wife, still smiling at us, though the laugh was against her; "and yet I have seen some men pretend to understanding that have very little."—"And no doubt," replied her antagonist, "you have known ladies set up for wits that had none." I quickly began to find that my wife was likely to gain but little at this business; so I resolved to treat him in a style of more severity myself. "Both wit and understanding," cried I, "are trifles, without integrity; it is that which gives value to every character. The ignorant peasant, without fault, is greater than the philosopher with many; for what is genius or courage without a heart?"

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."

"I always held that hackneyed maxim of Pope," returned Mr. Burchell, "as very unworthy a man of genius, and a base desertion of his own superiority. As the reputation of books is raised, not by their freedom from defect, but the greatness of their beauties; so should that of men be prized, not from their exemption from fault, but the size of those virtues they are pos-

sessed of. The scholar may want prudence, the statesman may have pride, and the champion ferocity; but shall we prefer to these the low mechanic, who laboriously plods on through life, without censure or applause? We might as well prefer the tame correct paintings of the Flemish school to the erroneous but sublime animations of the Roman pencil."

"Sir," replied I, "your present observation is just, when there are shining virtues and minute defects; but when it appears that great vices are opposed in the same mind to as extraordinary virtues, such a character deserves contempt."

"Perhaps," cried he, "there may be some such monsters as you describe, of great vices joined to great virtues: yet in my progress through life, I never yet found one instance of their existence: on the contrary, I have ever perceived, that where the mind was capacious, the affections were good. And indeed Providence seems kindly our friend in this particular, thus to debilitate the understanding where the heart is corrupt, and diminish the power where there is the will to do mischief. This rule seems to extend even to other animals: the little vermin race are ever treacherous, cruel, and cowardly; whilst those endowed with strength and power are generous, brave, and gentle."

"These observations sound well," returned I; "and yet it would be easy this moment to point out a man," and I fixed my eye stedfastly upon him, "whose head and heart form a most detestable contrast. Ay, Sir," continued I, raising my voice; "and I am glad to have this opportunity of detecting him in the midst of his fancied security. Do you know this, Sir? this pocket-book?"—"Yes, Sir," returned he, with a face of impenetrable assurance; "that pocket-book is mine, and I am glad you have found it."—"And do you know," cried I, "this letter?—nay, never falter, man; but look me full in the face: I say, do you know this letter?"—"That letter," replied he; "yes, it was I that wrote that letter."—"And how could you," said I, "so basely, so ungratefully presume to write this letter?"—"And how came you," replied he, with looks of unparalleled effrontery, "so basely to presume to break open this letter? Don't you know, now, I could hang you all for this? All that I have to do is to swear, at the next justice's, that you have been guilty of breaking open the lock of my pocket-book, and so hang

you all up at this door." This piece of unexpected insolence raised me to such a pitch, that I could scarcely govern my passion. "Ungrateful wretch, begone! and no longer pollute my dwelling with thy baseness. Begone! and never let me see thee again: go from my door; and the only punishment I wish thee is an alarmed conscience, which will be a sufficient tormentor!" So saying, I threw him his pocket-book, which he took up with a smile, and shutting the clasps with the utmost composure, left us, quite astonished at the serenity of his assurance. My wife was particularly enraged that nothing could make him angry, or make him seem ashamed of his villanies. "My dear," cried I, willing to calm those passions that had been raised too high among us, "we are not to be surprised that bad men want shame; they only blush at being detected in doing good, but glory in their vices.

"Guilt and Shame," says the allegory, "were at first companions, and in the beginning of their journey inseparably kept together. But their union was soon found to be disagreeable and inconvenient to both; Guilt gave Shame frequent uneasiness, and Shame often betrayed the secret conspiracies of Guilt. After long disagreement, therefore, they at length consented to part for ever. Guilt boldly walked forward alone, to overtake Fate, that went before in the shape of an executioner: but Shame, being naturally timorous, returned back to keep company with Virtue, which, in the beginning of their journey, they had left behind. Thus, my children, after men have travelled through a few stages in vice, shame forsakes them, and returns back to wait upon the few virtues they have still remaining."

CHAPTER XVI.

The family use art, which is opposed by still greater.

WHATEVER might have been Sophia's sensations, the rest of the family were easily consoled for Mr. Burchell's absence, by the company of our landlord, whose visits now became more frequent and longer. Though he had been disappointed in procuring my daughters the amusements of the town, as he designed, he took every opportunity of supplying them with those little recreations which our retirement would admit of. He usually came in the morning, and while my son and I followed our occupations abroad, he sat with the family at home, and amused them by describing the town, with every part of which he was particularly acquainted. He could repeat all the observations that were retailed in the atmosphere of the playhouses, and had all the good things of the high wits by rote long before they made their way into the jest-books. The intervals between conversation were employed in teaching my daughters piquet; or sometimes in setting my two little ones to box, to make them *sharp*, as he called it: but the hopes of having him for a son-in-law in some measure blinded us to all his imperfections. It must be owned that my wife laid a thousand schemes to entrap him; or, to speak more tenderly, used every art to magnify the merit of her daughter. If the cakes at tea eat short and crisp, they were made by Olivia; if the gooseberry wine was well knit, the gooseberries were of her gathering: it was her fingers which gave the pickles their peculiar green; and in the composition of a pudding, it was her judgment that mixed the ingredients. Then the poor woman would sometimes tell the squire, that she thought him and Olivia extremely of a size, and would bid both stand up to see which was the tallest. These instances of cunning, which she thought impenetrable, yet which every body saw through, were very pleasing to our benefactor, who gave

every day some new proofs of his passion, which though they had not arisen to proposals of marriage, yet we thought fell but very little short of it : and his slowness was attributed sometimes to native bashfulness, and sometimes to his fear of offending his uncle. An occurrence, however, which happened soon after, put it beyond a doubt that he designed to become one of our family ; my wife even regarded it as an absolute promise.

My wife and daughters happening to return a visit to neighbour Flamborough's, found that family had lately got their pictures drawn by the limner, who travelled the country, and took likenesses for fifteen shillings a head. As this family and ours had long a sort of rivalry in point of taste, our spirit took the alarm at this stolen march upon us ; and notwithstanding all I could say, and I said much, it was resolved that we should have our pictures done too. Having, therefore, engaged the limner, for what could I do ? our next deliberation was to show the superiority of our taste in the attitudes. As for our neighbour's family, there were seven of them, and they were drawn with seven oranges—a thing quite out of taste, no variety in life, no composition in the world. We desired to have something in a brighter style ; and, after many debates, at length came to a unanimous resolution of being drawn together, in one large historical family-piece. This would be cheaper, since one frame would serve for all ; and it would be infinitely more genteel ; for all families of any taste were now drawn in the same manner. As we did not immediately recollect an historical subject to hit us, we were contented each with being drawn as independent historical figures. My wife desired to be represented as Venus, and the painter was requested not to be too frugal of his diamonds in her stomacher and hair : her two little ones were to be as Cupids by her side ; while I, in my gown and band, was to present her with my books on the Whistonian controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon, sitting upon a bank of flowers, dressed in a green joseph, richly laced with gold, and a whip in her hand : Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could put in for nothing ; and Moses was to be dressed out with a hat and white feather. Our taste so much pleased the squire, that he insisted on being put in as one of the family, in the character of Alexander the Great, at Olivia's feet. This was considered by us all as an indication

of his desire to be introduced into the family, nor could we refuse his request. The painter was, therefore, set to work; and as he wrought with assiduity and expedition, in less than four days the whole was completed. The piece was large, and it must be owned he did not spare his colours; for which my wife gave him great encomiums. We were all perfectly satisfied with his performance; but an unfortunate circumstance, which had not occurred till the picture was finished, now struck us with dismay. It was so very large that we had no place in the house where to fix it. How we all came to disregard so material a point is inconceivable; but certain it is, we had all been greatly remiss. The picture, therefore, instead of gratifying our vanity, as we hoped, leaned, in a most mortifying manner, against the kitchen wall, where the canvas was stretched and painted, much too large to be got through any of the doors, and the jest of all our neighbours. One compared it to Robinson Crusoe's long boat, too large to be removed; another thought it more resembled a reel in a bottle; some wondered how it could be got out, but still more were amazed how it ever got in.

But though it excited the ridicule of some, it effectually raised more malicious suggestions in many. The squire's portrait being found united with ours, was an honour too great to escape envy. Scandalous whispers began to circulate at our expense, and our tranquillity was continually disturbed by persons who came as friends to tell us what was said of us by enemies. These reports we always resented with becoming spirit; but scandal ever improves by opposition.

We once again, therefore, entered into a consultation upon obviating the malice of our enemies, and at last came to a resolution which had too much cunning to give me entire satisfaction. It was this: as our principal object was to discover the honour of Mr. Thornhill's addresses, my wife undertook to sound him, by pretending to ask his advice in the choice of a husband for her eldest daughter. If this was not found sufficient to induce him to a declaration, it was then resolved to terrify him with a rival. To this last step, however, I would by no means give my consent, till Olivia gave me the most solemn assurances that she would marry the person provided to rival him upon this occasion, if he did not prevent it by taking her himself. Such was

the scheme laid, which, though I did not strenuously oppose, I did not entirely approve.

The next time, therefore, that Mr. Thornhill came to see us, my girls took care to be out of the way, in order to give their mamma an opportunity of putting her scheme into execution; but they only retired to the next room, from whence they could overhear the whole conversation. My wife artfully introduced it, by observing, that one of the Miss Flamboroughs was like to have a very good match of it in Mr. Spanker. To this the squire assenting, she proceeded to remark, that they who had warm fortunes were always sure of getting good husbands: "But heaven help," continued she, "the girls that have none! What signifies beauty, Mr. Thornhill? or what signifies all the virtue and all the qualifications in the world, in this age of self-interest? It is not, what is she? but what has she? is all the cry."

"Madam," returned he, "I highly approve the justice, as well as the novelty, of your remarks; and if I were a king, it should be otherwise. It should then, indeed, be fine times for the girls without fortunes; our two young ladies should be the first for whom I would provide."

"Ah, Sir!" returned my wife, "you are pleased to be facetious: but I wish I were a queen, and then I know where my eldest daughter should look for a husband. But now, that you have put it into my head, seriously, Mr. Thornhill, can't you recommend me a proper husband for her? She is now nineteen years old, well grown, and well educated; and, in my humble opinion, does not want for parts."

"Madam," replied he, "if I were to choose, I would find out a person possessed of accomplishment that can make an angel happy. One with prudence, fortune, taste, and sincerity; such, Madam, would be, in my opinion, the proper husband."—"Ay, Sir," said she, "but do you know of any such person?"—"No, Madam," returned he, "it is impossible to know any person that deserves to be her husband: she's too great a treasure for one man's possession: she's a goddess. Upon my soul, I speak what I think; she's an angel."—"Ah, Mr. Thornhill, you only flatter my poor girl: but we have been thinking of marrying her to one of your tenants, whose mother is lately dead, and who wants a manager: you know whom I mean, farmer Williams; a warm

man, Mr. Thornhill, able to give her good bread, and who has several times made her proposals"—(which was actually the case).—"But, Sir," concluded she, "I should be glad to have your approbation of our choice."—"How, Madam!" replied he, "my approbation? My approbation of such a choice? Never. What! sacrifice so much beauty, and sense, and goodness, to a creature insensible of the blessing! Excuse me, I can never approve of such a piece of injustice! And I have my reasons."—"Indeed, Sir!" cried Deborah, "if you have your reasons, that's another affair; but I should be glad to know those reasons."—"Excuse me, Madam," returned he, "they lie too deep for discovery (laying his hand upon his bosom); they remain buried, riveted here."

After he was gone, upon general consultation, we could not tell what to make of these fine sentiments. Olivia considered them as instances of the most exalted passion; but I was not quite so sanguine: it seemed to me pretty plain, that they had more of love than matrimony in them: yet, whatever they might portend, it was resolved to prosecute the scheme of farmer Williams, who, from my daughter's first appearance in the country, had paid her his addresses.

CHAPTER XVII.

Scarcely any virtue found to resist the power of long and pleasing temptation.

As I only studied my child's real happiness, the assiduity of Mr. Williams pleased me, as he was in easy circumstances, prudent, and sincere. It required but very little encouragement to revive his former passion; so that in an evening or two he and Mr. Thornhill met at our house, and surveyed each other for some time with looks of anger; but Williams owed his landlord no rent, and little regarded his indignation. Olivia, on her side, acted the coquette to perfection; if that might be called

acting which was her real character, pretending to lavish all her tenderness on her new lover. Mr. Thornhill appeared quite dejected at this preference, and with a pensive air took leave; though I own it puzzled me to find him so much in pain as he appeared to be, when he had it in his power so easily to remove the cause, by declaring an honourable passion. But whatever uneasiness he seemed to endure, it could easily be perceived that Olivia's anguish was still greater. After any of these interviews between her lovers, of which there were several, she usually retired to solitude, and there indulged her grief. It was in such a situation I found her one evening, after she had been for some time supporting a fictitious gaiety. "You now see, my child," said I, "that your confidence in Mr. Thornhill's passion was all a dream; he permits the rivalry of another, every way his inferior, though he knows it lies in his power to secure you to himself by a candid declaration."—"Yes, papa," returned she, "but he has his reasons for this delay; I know he has. The sincerity of his looks and words convinces me of his real esteem. A short time, I hope, will discover the generosity of his sentiments, and convince you that my opinion of him has been more just than yours."—"Olivia, my darling," returned I, "every scheme that has been hitherto pursued to compel him to a declaration, has been proposed and planned by yourself, nor can you in the least say that I have constrained you. But you must not suppose, my dear, that I will ever be instrumental in suffering his honest rival to be the dupe of your ill-placed passion. Whatever time you require to bring your fancied admirer to an explanation shall be granted: but at the expiration of that term, if he is still regardless, I must absolutely insist that honest Mr. Williams shall be rewarded for his fidelity. The character which I have hitherto supported in life demands this from me; and my tenderness, as a parent, shall never influence my integrity as a man. Name then your day; let it be as distant as you think proper, and in the mean time take care to let Mr. Thornhill know the exact time on which I design delivering you up to another. If he really loves you, his own good sense will readily suggest that there is but one method alone to prevent his losing you for ever." This proposal, which she could not avoid considering as perfectly just, was readily agreed to.

She again renewed her most positive promise of marrying Mr. Williams, in case of the other's insensibility; and at the next opportunity, in Mr. Thornhill's presence, that day month was fixed upon for her nuptials with his rival.

Such vigorous proceedings seemed to redouble Mr. Thornhill's anxiety: but what Olivia really felt gave me some uneasiness. In this struggle between prudence and passion, her vivacity quite forsook her, and every opportunity of solitude was sought, and spent in tears. One week passed away, but Mr. Thornhill made no efforts to restrain her nuptials. The succeeding week he was still assiduous, but not more open. On the third he discontinued his visits entirely; and instead of my daughter testifying any impatience, as I expected, she seemed to retain a pensive tranquillity, which I looked upon as resignation. For my own part, I was now sincerely pleased with thinking that my child was going to be secured in a continuance of competence and peace, and frequently applauded her resolution in preferring happiness to ostentation.

It was within about four days of her intended nuptials, that my little family at night were gathered round a charming fire, telling stories of the past, and laying schemes for the future. Busied in forming a thousand projects, and laughing at whatever folly came uppermost, "Well, Moses," cried I, "we shall soon, my boy, have a wedding in the family; what is your opinion of matters and things in general?"—"My opinion, father, is that all things go on very well; and I was just now thinking, that when sister Livy is married to farmer Williams, we shall then have the loan of his cider-press and brewing-tubs for nothing."—"That we shall, Moses," cried I, "and he will sing us *Death and the Lady* to raise our spirits into the bargain."—"He has taught that song to our Dick," cried Moses; "and I think he goes through it very prettily."—"Does he so?" cried I, "then let us have it: Where is little Dick? let him up with it boldly."—"My brother Dick," cried Bill, my youngest, "is just gone out with sister Livy; but Mr. Williams has taught me two songs, and I'll sing them for you, papa. Which song do you choose, *The Dying Swan*, or the *Elegy on the Death of a mad Dog*?" "The elegy, child, by all means," said I; "I never heard that yet; and Deborah, my life, grief you know is dry; let us have a bottle of the best gooseberry wine, to keep up our spirits. I

have wept so much at all sorts of elegies of late, that, without an enlivening glass, I am sure this will overcome me; and Sophy, love, take your guitar, and thrum in with the boy a little."

AN ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG.

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song;
And if you find it wondrous short,
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man,
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes;
The naked every day he clad,
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man!

Around from all the neighbouring streets,
The wondering neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seem'd both sore and sad
To every christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That show'd the rogues they lied;
The man recover'd of the bite,—
The dog it was that died.

"A very good boy, Bill, upon my word; and an elegy that may truly be called tragical. Come, my children, here's Bill's health, and may he one day be a bishop!"

"With all my heart," cried my wife; "and if he but preaches as well as he sings, I make no doubt of him. The most of his family, by the mother's side, could sing a good song: it was a common saying in our country, that the family of the Blenkinsops could never look straight before them, nor the Hugginsons blow out a candle; that there were none of the Gograms but could sing a song, or of the Marjorams but could tell a story."—"However that be," cried I, "the most vulgar ballad of them all generally pleases me better than the fine modern odes, and things that petrify us in a single stanza; productions that we at once detest and praise.—Put the glass to your brother, Moses. —The great fault of these elegiasts is, that they are in despair for griefs that give the sensible part of mankind very little pain. A lady loses her muff, her fan, or her lap-dog, and so the silly poet runs home to versify the disaster."

"That may be the mode," cried Moses, "in sublimer compositions; but the Ranelagh songs that come down to us are perfectly familiar, and all cast in the same mould: Colin meets Dolly and they hold a dialogue together; he gives her a fairing to put in her hair, and she presents him with a nosegay; and then they go together to church, where they give good advice to young nymphs and swains to get married as fast as they can."

"And very good advice too," cried I; "and I am told there is not a place in the world where advice can be given with so much propriety as there; for, as it persuades us to marry, it also furnishes us with a wife; and surely that must be an excellent market, my boy, where we are told what we want, and supplied with it when wanting."

"Yes, Sir," returned Moses, "and I know but of two such markets for wives in Europe—Ranelagh in England, and Fontarabia in Spain. The Spanish market is open once a year, but our English wives are saleable every night."

"You are right, my boy," cried his mother, "Old England is the only place in the world for husbands to get wives."—"And for wives to manage their husbands," interrupted I. "It is a proverb abroad, that if a bridge were built across the sea, all the ladies of the Continent would come over to take pattern from

ours; for there are no such wives in Europe as our own. But let us have one bottle more, Deborah, my life: and Moses, give us a good song. What thanks do we not owe to heaven for thus bestowing tranquillity, health, and competence. I think myself happier now than the greatest monarch upon earth. He has no such fire-side, nor such pleasant faces about it. Yes, Deborah, we are now growing old; but the evening of our life is likely to be happy. We are descended from ancestors that knew no stain, and we shall leave a good and virtuous race of children behind us. While we live they will be our support and our pleasure, here, and when we die they will transmit our honour untainted to posterity. Come, my son, we wait for a song: let us have a chorus. But where is my darling Olivia? That little cherub's voice is always sweetest in the concert."—Just as I spoke, Dick came running in, "O papa! she is gone from us, she is gone from us, she is gone from us; my sister Livy is gone from us for ever."—"Gone, child?"—"Yes, she is gone off with two gentlemen in a postchaise; and one of them kissed her, and said he would die for her; and she cried very much, and was for coming back; but he persuaded her again, and she went into the chaise, and said, 'O, what will my poor papa do when he knows I am undone!'"—"Now then," cried I, "my children, go and be miserable; for we shall never enjoy one hour more. And, O may heaven's everlasting fury light upon him and his!—thus to rob me of my child! And sure it will, for taking back my sweet innocent that I was leading up to heaven. Such sincerity as my child was possessed of! but all our earthly happiness is now over! Go, my children, go, and be miserable and infamous; for my heart is broken within me!"—"Father," cried my son, "is this your fortitude?"—"Fortitude, child! Yes, he shall see I have fortitude! Bring me my pistols. I'll pursue the traitor; while he is on earth, I'll pursue him. Old as I am, he shall find I can sting him yet. The villain! the perfidious villain!"—I had by this time reached down my pistols, when my poor wife, whose passions were not so strong as mine, caught me in her arms. "My dearest, dearest husband," cried she, "the bible is the only weapon that is fit for your old hands now. Open that, my love, and read our anguish into patience, for she has vilely deceived us."—"Indeed, Sir," resumed my son, after a pause, "your rage is too violent and unbecoming: you should be my mother's com-

forter, and you increase her pain. It ill suited you and your reverend character thus to curse your greatest enemy: you should not have cursed him, villain as he is."—"I did not curse him, child, did I?"—"Indeed, Sir, you did; you cursed him twice."—"Then may Heaven forgive me and him, if I did. And now, my son, I see it was more than human benevolence that first taught us to bless our enemies. Blessed be his holy name for all the good he hath given, and for all that he hath taken away. But it is not, it is not a small distress that can wring tears from these old eyes, that have not wept for so many years. My child!—to undo my darling! May confusion seize—Heaven forgive me: what am I about to say? You may remember, my love, how good she was, and how charming; till this vile moment, all her care was to make us happy. Had she but died!—But she is gone, the honour of our family is contaminated, and I must look out for happiness in other worlds than here. But, my child, you saw them go off: perhaps he forced her away. If he forced her, she may yet be innocent."—"Ah no, Sir," cried the child; "he only kissed her, and called her his angel; and she wept very much, and leaned upon his arm, and they drove off very fast."—"She's an ungrateful creature," cried my wife, who could scarce speak for weeping, "to use us thus. She never had the least constraint put upon her affections. The vile strumpet has basely deserted her parents without any provocation, thus to bring your gray hairs to the grave, and I must shortly follow."

In this manner that night, the first of our real misfortunes, was spent in the bitterness of complaint, and ill-supported sallies of enthusiasm. I determined, however, to find out our betrayer, wherever he was, and reproach his baseness. The next morning we missed our wretched child at breakfast, where she used to give life and cheerfulness to us all. My wife, as before, attempted to ease her heart by reproaches. "Never," cried she, "shall that vilest stain of our family again darken these harmless doors. I will never call her daughter more. No, let the strumpet live with her vile seducer: she may bring us to shame, but she shall never more deceive us."

"Wife," said I, "do not talk thus hardly: my detestation of her guilt is as great as yours; but ever shall this house and this heart be open to a poor returning repentant sinner. The

sooner she returns from her transgression, the more welcome shall she be to me. For the first time, the very best may err; art may persuade, and novelty spread out its charm. The first fault is the child of simplicity, but every other the offspring of guilt. Yes, the wretched creature shall be welcome to this heart and this house, though stained with ten thousand vices. I will again hearken to the music of her voice, again will I hang fondly on her bosom, if I find but repentance there.—My son, bring hither my bible and my staff: I will pursue her, wherever she is; and though I cannot save her from shame, I may prevent the continuance of iniquity.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

The pursuit of a father to reclaim a lost child to virtue.

THOUGH the child could not describe the gentleman's person who handed his sister into the postchaise, yet my suspicions fell entirely upon our young landlord, whose character for such intrigues was but too well known. I therefore directed my steps towards Thornhill Castle, resolving to upbraid him, and, if possible, to bring back my daughter: but before I had reached his seat, I was met by one of my parishioners, who said he saw a young lady resembling my daughter, in a postchaise with a gentleman, whom, by the description, I could only guess to be Mr. Burchell, and that they drove very fast. This information, however, did by no means satisfy me; I therefore went to the young squire's, and though it was yet early, insisted upon seeing him immediately: he soon appeared with the most open familiar air, and seemed perfectly amazed at my daughter's elopement; protesting upon his honour that he was quite a stranger to it. I now, therefore, condemned my former suspicions, and could turn them only on Mr. Burchell, who I recollected had of late several private conferences with her: but the appearance of another witness left me no room to doubt of his villany, who

averred, that he and my daughter were actually gone towards the Wells, about thirty miles off, where there was a great deal of company. Being driven to that state of mind in which we are more ready to act precipitately than to reason right, I never debated with myself, whether these accounts might not have been given by persons purposely placed in my way, to mislead me, but resolved to pursue my daughter and her fancied deluder thither. I walked along with earnestness, and inquired of several by the way: but received no accounts, till, entering the town, I was met by a person on horseback, whom I remembered to have seen at the squire's; and he assured me, that if I followed them to the races, which were but thirty miles further, I might depend upon overtaking them; for he had seen them dance there the night before, and the whole assembly seemed charmed with my daughter's performance. Early the next day, I walked forward to the races, and about four in the afternoon I came upon the course. The company made a very brilliant appearance, all earnestly employed in one pursuit, that of pleasure; how different from mine! that of reclaiming a lost child to virtue! I thought I perceived Mr. Burchell at some distance from me; but, as if he dreaded an interview, upon my approaching him, he mixed among a crowd, and I saw him no more.

I now reflected that it would be to no purpose to continue my pursuit further, and resolved to return home to an innocent family, who wanted my assistance. But the agitations of my mind, and the fatigues I had undergone, threw me into a fever, the symptoms of which I perceived before I came off the course. This was another unexpected stroke, as I was more than seventy miles distant from home: however, I retired to a little alehouse by the road side; and in this place, the usual retreat of indigence and frugality, I laid me down patiently to wait the issue of my disorder. I languished here for near three weeks; but at last my constitution prevailed, though I was unprovided with money to defray the expenses of my entertainment. It is possible the anxiety from this last circumstance alone might have brought on a relapse, had I not been supplied by a traveller, who stopped to take a cursory refreshment. This person was no other than the philanthropic bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard, who has written so many little books for children: he called himself their friend; but he was the friend of all man-

kind. He was no sooner alighted, but he was in haste to be gone; for he was ever on business of the utmost importance, and was at that time actually compiling materials for the history of one Mr. Thomas Trip. I immediately recollected this good-natured man's red pimpled face; for he had published for me against the deuterogamists of the age, and from him I borrowed a few pieces, to be paid at my return. Leaving the inn, therefore, as I was yet but weak, I resolved to return home by easy journeys of ten miles a day. My health and usual tranquillity were almost restored; and I now condemned that pride which had made me refractory to the hand of correction.—Man little knows what calamities are beyond his patience to bear, till he tries them: as in ascending the heights of ambition, which look bright from below, every step we rise shows us some new and gloomy prospect of hidden disappointment; so in our descent from the summits of pleasure, though the vale of misery below may appear at first dark and gloomy, yet the busy mind, still attentive to its own amusement, finds as we descend something to flatter and to please: still, as we approach, the darkest objects appear to brighten, and the mental eye becomes adapted to its gloomy situation.

I now proceeded forward, and had walked about two hours, when I perceived what appeared at a distance like a waggon, which I was resolved to overtake; but when I came up with it, I found it to be a strolling company's cart, that was carrying their scenes and other theatrical furniture to the next village, where they were to exhibit. The cart was attended only by the person who drove it, and one of the company, as the rest of the players were to follow the ensuing day. "Good company upon the road," says the proverb, "is the shortest cut." I therefore entered into conversation with the poor player; and as I once had some theatrical powers myself, I descanted on such topics with my usual freedom: but as I was pretty much unacquainted with the present state of the stage, I demanded who were the present theatrical writers in vogue, who the Drydens and Otways of the day.—"I fancy, Sir," cried the player, "few of our modern dramatists would think themselves much honoured by being compared to the writers you mention. Dryden and Rowe's manner, Sir, are quite out of fashion: our taste has gone back a whole century; Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and all

the plays of Shakspeare, are the only things that go down.”—“How!” cried I, “is it possible the present age can be pleased with that antiquated dialect, that obsolete humour, those over-charged characters which abound in the works you mention?”—“Sir,” returned my companion, “the public thinks nothing about dialect, or humour, or character; for that is none of their business; they only go to be amused, and find themselves happy when they can enjoy a pantomime, under the sanction of Jonson’s or Shakspeare’s name.”—“So then, I suppose,” cried I, “that our modern dramatists are rather imitators of Shakspeare than nature.”—“To say the truth,” returned my companion, “I don’t know that they imitate any thing at all; nor indeed does the public require it of them; it is not the composition of the piece, but the number of starts and attitudes that may be introduced into it, that elicits applause. I have known a piece with not one jest in the whole, shrugged into popularity; and another saved, by the poet’s throwing in a fit of the gripes. No, Sir, the works of Congreve and Farquhar have too much wit in them for the present taste; our modern dialect is much more natural.”

By this time the equipage of the strolling company was arrived at the village, which, it seems, had been apprised of our approach, and was come out to gaze at us; for my companion observed, that strollers always have more spectators without doors than within. I did not consider the impropriety of my being in such company, till I saw a mob gather about me. I therefore took shelter, as fast as possible, in the first alehouse that offered; and being shown into the common room, was accosted by a very well-dressed gentleman, who demanded whether I was the real chaplain of the company, or whether it was only to be my masquerade character in the play. Upon informing him of the truth, and that I did not belong in any sort to the company, he was condescending enough to desire me and the player to partake of a bowl of punch, over which he discussed modern politics with great earnestness and interest. I set him down in my mind for nothing less than a parliament-man at least; but was almost confirmed in my conjectures, when upon asking what there was in the house for supper, he insisted that the player and I should sup with him at his house, with which request, after some entreaties, we were prevailed on to comply.

CHAPTER XIX.

The description of a person discontented with the present government, and apprehensive of the loss of our liberties.

THE house where we were to be entertained, lying at a small distance from the village, our inviter observed, that as the coach was not ready, he would conduct us on foot; and we soon arrived at one of the most magnificent mansions I had seen in that part of the country. The apartment into which we were shown was perfectly elegant and modern: he went to give orders for supper, while the player, with a wink, observed that we were perfectly in luck. Our entertainer soon returned, an elegant supper was brought in, two or three ladies in an easy dishabille were introduced, and the conversation began with some sprightliness. Politics, however, were the subject on which our entertainer chiefly expatiated; for he asserted that liberty was at once his boast and his terror. After the cloth was removed, he asked me if I had seen the last Monitor; to which replying in the negative, "What, nor the Auditor, I suppose?" cried he.—"Neither, Sir," returned I.—"That's strange, very strange," replied my entertainer.—"Now, I read all the politics that come out; the Daily, the Public, the Ledger, the Chronicle, the London Evening, the Whitehall Evening, the seventeen Magazines, and the two Reviews; and though they hate each other, I love them all. Liberty, Sir, liberty is the Briton's boast; and by all my coal-mines in Cornwall, I reverence its guardians!"—"Then it is to be hoped," cried I, "you reverence the king."—"Yes," returned my entertainer, "when he does what we would have him; but if he goes on as he has done of late, I'll never trouble myself more with his matters. I say nothing: I think only, I could have directed some things better. I don't think there has been a sufficient number of advisers: he should advise with every person willing to give him advice, and then we should have things done in another guess manner."

"I wish," cried I, "that such intruding advisers were fixed in the pillory. It should be the duty of honest men to assist the weaker side of our constitution, that sacred power that has for some years been every day declining, and losing its due share of influence in the state. But these ignorants still continue the cry of liberty, and, if they have any weight, basely throw it into the subsiding scale."

"How!" cried one of the ladies, "do I live to see one so base, so sordid, as to be an enemy to liberty, and a defender of tyrants? Liberty, that sacred gift of heaven, that glorious privilege of Britons!"

"Can it be possible," cried our entertainer, "that there should be any found at present advocates for slavery? any who are for meanly giving up the privileges of Britons? Can any, Sir, be so abject?"

"No, Sir," replied I; "I am for liberty, that attribute of gods! Glorious liberty! that theme of modern declamation. I would have all men kings. I would be a king myself. We have all naturally an equal right to the throne: we are all originally equal. This is my opinion, and was once the opinion of a set of honest men who were called Levellers. They tried to erect themselves into a community, where all should be equally free. But, alas! it would never answer; for there were some among them stronger, and some more cunning than others, and these became masters of the rest; for as sure as your groom rides your horses, because he is a cunninger animal than they, so surely will the animal that is cunninger or stronger than he, sit upon his shoulders in turn. Since then it is entailed upon humanity to submit, and some are born to command and others to obey; the question is, as there must be tyrants, whether it is better to have them in the same house with us, or in the same village, or still further off, in the metropolis. Now, Sir, for my own part, as I naturally hate the face of a tyrant, the further off he is removed from me, the better pleased am I. The generality of mankind also are of my way of thinking, and have unanimously created one king, whose election at once diminishes the number of tyrants, and puts tyranny at the greatest distance from the greatest number of people. Now the great, who were tyrants themselves before the election of one tyrant, are naturally averse to a power raised over them, and whose weight

must ever lean heaviest on the subordinate orders. It is the interest of the great, therefore, to diminish kingly power as much as possible ; because whatever they take from that, is naturally restored to themselves ; and all they have to do in the state, is to undermine the single tyrant, by which they resume their primeval authority. Now the state may be so circumstanced, or its laws may be so disposed, or its men of opulence so minded, as all to conspire in carrying on this business of undermining monarchy. For, in the first place, if the circumstances of our state be such as to favour the accumulation of wealth, and make the opulent still more rich, this will increase their ambition. An accumulation of wealth, however, must necessarily be the consequence, when, as at present, more riches flow in from external commerce than arise from internal industry : for external commerce can only be managed to advantage by the rich, and they have also at the same time all the emoluments arising from internal industry : so that the rich with us have two sources of wealth, whereas the poor have but one. For this reason, wealth, in all commercial states, is found to accumulate, and all such have hitherto in time become aristocratical. Again, the very laws also of this country may contribute to the accumulation of wealth ; as when, by their means, the natural ties that bind the rich and the poor together are broken, and it is ordained that the rich shall only marry with the rich ; or when the learned are held unqualified to serve their country as counsellors merely from a defect of opulence, and wealth is thus made the object of a wise man's ambition ; by these means, I say, and such means as these, riches will accumulate. Now the possessor of accumulated wealth, when furnished with the necessaries and pleasures of life, has no other method to employ the superfluity of his fortune but in purchasing power ; that is, differently speaking, in making dependants, by purchasing the liberty of the needy or venal, of men who are willing to bear the mortification of contiguous tyranny for bread. Thus each very opulent man generally gathers round him a circle of the poorest of the people ; and the polity abounding in accumulated wealth, may be compared to a Cartesian system, each orb with a vortex of its own. Those, however, who are willing to move in a great man's vortex are only such as must be slaves, the rabble of mankind, whose souls and whose education are adapted to servitude, and

who know nothing of liberty except the name. But there must still be a large number of the people without the sphere of the opulent man's influence; namely, that order of men which subsists between the very rich and the very rabble; those men who are possessed of too large fortunes to submit to the neighbouring man in power, and yet are too poor to set up for tyranny themselves. In this middle order of mankind are generally to be found all the arts, wisdom, and virtues of society. This order alone is known to be the true preserver of freedom, and may be called the people. Now it may happen that this middle order of mankind may lose all its influence in a state, and its voice be in a manner drowned in that of the rabble; for if the fortune sufficient for qualifying a person at present to give his voice in state affairs, be ten times less than was judged sufficient upon forming the constitution, it is evident that greater numbers of the rabble will thus be introduced into the political system, and they, ever moving in the vortex of the great, will follow where greatness shall direct. In such a state, therefore, all that the middle order has left, is to preserve the prerogative and privileges of the one principal governor with the most sacred circumspection. For he divides the power of the rich, and calls off the great from falling with tenfold weight on the middle order placed beneath them. The middle order may be compared to a town, of which the opulent are forming the siege, and of which the governor from without is hastening the relief. While the besiegers are in dread of an enemy over them, it is but natural to offer the townsmen the most specious terms; to flatter them with sounds, and amuse them with privileges; but if they once defeat the governor from behind, the walls of the town will be but a small defence to its inhabitants. What they may then expect, may be seen by turning our eyes to Holland, Genoa, or Venice, where the laws govern the poor, and the rich govern the laws. I am then for, and would die for, monarchy, sacred monarchy; for if there be any thing sacred amongst men, it must be the anointed Sovereign of his people; and every diminution of his power in war, or in peace, is an infringement upon the real liberties of the subject. The sounds of liberty, patriotism, and Britons have already done much; it is to be hoped that the true sons of freedom will prevent their ever doing more. I have known many of those pre-

tended champions for liberty in my time, yet do I not remember one that was not in his heart and in his family a tyrant."

My warmth I found had lengthened this harangue beyond the rules of good breeding: but the impatience of my entertainer, who often strove to interrupt it, could be restrained no longer. "What!" cried he, "then I have been all this while entertaining a Jesuit in parson's clothes! but by all the coal-mines in Cornwall, out he shall pack, if my name be Wilkinson." I now found I had gone too far, and asked pardon for the warmth with which I had spoken. "Pardon!" returned he, in a fury; "I think such principles demand ten thousand pardons. What! give up liberty, property, and, as the *Gazeteer* says, lie down to be saddled with wooden shoes! Sir, I insist upon your marching out of this house immediately, to prevent worse consequences; Sir, I insist upon it." I was going to repeat my remonstrances; but just then we heard a footman's rap at the door, and the two ladies cried out, "As sure as death, there is our master and mistress come home." It seems my entertainer was all this while only the butler, who, in his master's absence, had a mind to cut a figure, and be for awhile the gentleman himself; and, to say the truth, he talked politics as well as most country gentlemen do. But nothing could now exceed my confusion, upon seeing the gentleman and his lady enter; nor was their surprise, at finding such company and good cheer, less than ours. "Gentlemen," cried the real master of the house, to me and my companion, "my wife and I are your most humble servants; but I protest this is so unexpected a favour that we almost sink under the obligation." However unexpected our company might be to them, theirs, I am sure, was still more so to us; and I was struck dumb with the apprehensions of my own absurdity, when whom should I next see enter the room but my dear Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was formerly designed to be married to my son George, but whose match was broken off as already related. As soon as she saw me, she flew to my arms with the utmost joy. "My dear Sir," cried she, "to what happy accident is it that we owe so unexpected a visit? I am sure my uncle and aunt will be in raptures when they find they have got the good Dr. Primrose for their guest." Upon hearing my name, the old gentleman and lady very politely stepped up, and, wel-

comed me with most cordial hospitality; nor could they forbear smiling upon being informed of the nature of my present visit: but the unfortunate butler, whom they at first seemed disposed to turn away, was, at my intercession, forgiven.

Mr. Arnold and his lady, to whom the house belonged, now insisted upon having the pleasure of my stay for some days; and as their niece, my charming pupil, whose mind, in some measure, had been formed under my own instructions, joined in their entreaties, I complied. That night I was shown to a magnificent chamber; and the next morning early, Miss Wilmot desired to walk with me in the garden, which was decorated in the modern manner. After some time spent in pointing out the beauties of the place, she inquired, with seeming unconcern, when last I had heard from my son George. "Alas! Madam," cried I, "he has now been nearly three years absent, without ever writing to his friends or me. Where he is I know not; perhaps I shall never see him or happiness more. No, my dear Madam, we shall never more see such pleasing hours as were once spent by our fire-side at Wakefield. My little family are now dispersing very fast, and poverty has brought not only want, but infamy upon us." The good-natured girl let fall a tear at this account; but as I saw her possessed of too much sensibility, I forbore a more minute detail of our sufferings. It was, however, some consolation to me, to find that time had made no alteration in her affections, and that she had rejected several offers that had been made her since our leaving her part of the country. She led me round all the extensive improvements of the place, pointing to the several walks and arbours, and at the same time catching from every object a hint for some new question relative to my son. In this manner we spent the forenoon, till the bell summoned us in to dinner, where we found the manager of the strolling company that I mentioned before, who was come to dispose of tickets for the Fair Penitent, which was to be acted that evening, the part of Horatio by a young gentleman who had never appeared on any stage. He seemed to be very warm in the praises of the new performer, and averred, that he never saw any who bid so fair for excellence. Acting, he observed, was not learned in a day; "but this gentleman," continued he, "seems born to tread the stage. His voice, his figure, and attitudes, are all admirable. We caught him up acci-

dentially in our journey down." This account, in some measure, excited our curiosity, and, at the entreaty of the ladies, I was prevailed upon to accompany them to the play-house, which was no other than a barn. As the company with which I went was incontestably the chief of the place, we were received with the greatest respect, and placed in the front seat of the theatre; where we sat for some time with no small impatience to see Horatio make his appearance. The new performer advanced at last, and let parents think of my sensations by their own, when I found it was my unfortunate son. He was going to begin, when, turning his eyes upon the audience, he perceived Miss Wilmot and me, and stood at once speechless and immoveable. The actors behind the scene, who ascribed this pause to his natural timidity, attempted to encourage him; but instead of going on, he burst into a flood of tears, and retired off the stage. I do not know what were my feelings on this occasion, for they succeeded with too much rapidity for description; but I was soon awakened from this disagreeable reverie by Miss Wilmot, who, pale and with a trembling voice, desired me to conduct her back to her uncle's. When got home, Mr. Arnold, who was as yet a stranger to our extraordinary behaviour, being informed that the new performer was my son, sent his coach and an invitation for him; and as he persisted in his refusal to appear again upon the stage, the players put another in his place, and we soon had him with us. Mr. Arnold gave him the kindest reception, and I received him with my usual transport; for I could never counterfeit false resentment. Miss Wilmot's reception was mixed with seeming neglect, and yet I could perceive she acted a studied part. The tumult in her mind seemed not yet abated; she said twenty giddy things that looked like joy, and then laughed loud at her own want of meaning. At intervals she would take a sly peep at the glass, as if happy in the consciousness of irresistible beauty, and often would ask questions without giving any manner of attention to the answers.

CHAPTER XX.

The history of a philosophic vagabond, pursuing novelty, but losing content.

AFTER we had supped, Mrs. Arnold politely offered to send a couple of her footmen for my son's baggage, which he at first seemed to decline; but upon her pressing the request, he was obliged to inform her, that a stick and a wallet were all the moveable things upon this earth that he could boast of. "Why, ay, my son," cried I, "you left me but poor, and poor I find you are come back; and yet I make no doubt you have seen a great deal of the world."—"Yes, Sir," replied my son, "but travelling after fortune is not the way to secure her; and, indeed, of late, I have desisted from the pursuit."—"I fancy, Sir," cried Mrs. Arnold, "that the account of your adventures would be amusing; the first part of them I have often heard from my niece; but could the company prevail for the rest, it would be an additional obligation."—"Madam," replied my son, "I promise you the pleasure you have in hearing will not be half so great as my vanity in repeating them; and yet in the whole narrative I can scarcely promise you one adventure, as my account is rather of what I saw than what I did. The first misfortune of my life, which you all know, was great; but though it distressed, it could not sink me. No person ever had a better knack at hoping than I. The less kind I found Fortune at one time, the more I expected from her another; and being now at the bottom of her wheel, every new revolution might lift, but could not depress me. I proceeded, therefore, towards London, in a fine morning, no way uneasy about to-morrow, but cheerful as the birds that carolled by the road, and comforted myself with reflecting, that London was the mart where abilities of every kind were sure of meeting distinction and reward.

"Upon my arrival in town, Sir, my first care was to deliver your letter of recommendation to our cousin, who was himself

in little better circumstances than I. My first scheme, you know, Sir, was to be usher at an academy, and I asked his advice on the affair. Our cousin received the proposal with a true Sardonic grin. 'Ay,' cried he, 'this is indeed a very pretty career, that has been chalked out for you. I have been an usher at a boarding-school myself; and may I die by an anodyne necklace, but I had rather be an under-turnkey in Newgate. I was up early and late: I was browbeaten by the master, hated for my ugly face by the mistress, worried by the boys within, and never permitted to stir out to meet civility abroad. But are you sure you are fit for a school? Let me examine you a little. Have you been bred apprentice to the business?'—No.—'Then you won't do for a school. Can you dress the boys' hair?'—No.—'Then you won't do for a school. Have you had the small-pox?'—No.—'Then you won't do for a school. Can you lie three in a bed?'—No.—'Then you will never do for a school. Have you got a good stomach?'—Yes.—'Then you will by no means do for a school. No, Sir, if you are for a genteel easy profession, bind yourself seven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's wheel; but avoid a school by any means. Yet come,' continued he, 'I see you are a lad of spirit and some learning, what do you think of commencing author, like me? You have read in books, no doubt, of men of genius starving at the trade: at present I'll show you forty very dull fellows about town, that live by it in opulence. All honest jog-trot men, who go on smoothly and dully, and write history and politics, and are praised: men, Sir, who, had they been bred cobblers, would all their lives have only mended shoes, but never made them.'

"Finding that there was no great degree of gentility affixed to the character of an usher, I resolved to accept his proposal; and having the highest respect for literature, hailed the *antiqua mater* of Grub-street with reverence. I thought it my glory to pursue a track which Dryden and Otway trod before me. I considered the goddess of this region as the parent of excellence; and however an intercourse with the world might give us good sense, the poverty she entailed I supposed to be the nurse of genius! Big with these reflections, I sat down; and finding that the best things remained to be said on the wrong side, I resolved to write a book that should be wholly new. I therefore dressed up three paradoxes with some ingenuity: they were false, indeed, but

they were new. The jewels of truth have been so often imported by others, that nothing was left for me to import but some splendid things, that at a distance looked every bit as well. Witness, you powers, what fancied importance sat perched upon my quill while I was writing? The whole learned world, I made no doubt, would rise to oppose my systems; but then I was prepared to oppose the whole learned world. Like the porcupine, I sat self-collected, with a quill pointed against every opposer."

"Well said, my boy," cried I; "and what subject did you treat upon? I hope you did not pass over the importance of monogamy. But I interrupt; go on. You published your paradoxes; well, and what did the learned world say to your paradoxes?"

"Sir," replied my son, "the learned world said nothing to my paradoxes; nothing at all, Sir. Every man of them was employed in praising his friends and himself, or condemning his enemies; and unfortunately, as I had neither, I suffered the cruellest mortification, neglect."

"As I was meditating one day in a coffee-house on the fate of my paradoxes, a little man happening to enter the room, placed himself in the box before me; and after some preliminary discourse, finding me to be a scholar, drew out a bundle of proposals, begging me to subscribe to a new edition he was going to give to the world of Propertius, with notes. This demand necessarily produced a reply that I had no money; and that concession led him to inquire into the nature of my expectations. Finding that my expectations were just as great as my purse, 'I see,' cried he, 'you are unacquainted with the town. I'll teach you a part of it. Look at these proposals; upon these very proposals I have subsisted very comfortably for twelve years. The moment a nobleman returns from his travels, a Creolian arrives from Jamaica, or a dowager from her country-seat, I strike for a subscription. I first besiege their hearts with flattery, and then pour in my proposals at the breach. If they subscribe readily the first time, I renew my request to beg a dedication fee; if they let me have that, I smite them once more for engraving their coat of arms at the top. Thus,' continued he, 'I live by vanity, and laugh at it. But, between ourselves, I am now too well known; I should be glad to borrow your face a bit: a nobleman of distinction has just returned from Italy; my face is familiar to his

porter: but if you bring this copy of verses, my life for it you succeed, and we divide the spoil.”

“Bless us, George,” cried I, “and is this the employment of poets now? Do men of their exalted talents thus stoop to beggary? Can they so far disgrace their calling, as to make a vile traffic of praise for bread?”

“O no, Sir,” returned he, “a true poet can never be so base; for wherever there is genius there is pride: the creatures I now describe are only beggars in rhyme. The real poet, as he braves every hardship for fame, so is he equally a coward to contempt; and none but those who are unworthy protection, condescend to solicit it.

“Having a mind too proud to stoop to such indignities, and yet a fortune too humble to hazard a second attempt for fame, I was now obliged to take a middle course, and write for bread; but I was unqualified for a profession where mere industry alone was to ensure success. I could not suppress my lurking passion for applause; but usually consumed that time in efforts after excellence which takes up but little room, when it should have been more advantageously employed in the diffusive productions of fruitful mediocrity. My little piece would therefore come forth, in the midst of periodical publications, unnoticed and unknown. The public were more importantly employed, than to observe the easy simplicity of my style, or the harmony of my periods. Sheet after sheet was thrown off to oblivion. My essays were buried among the essays upon liberty, eastern tales, and cures for the bite of a mad dog; while Philautus, Philalethes, Philelutheros, and Philanthropos, all wrote better, because they wrote faster, than I.

“Now, therefore, I began to associate with none but disappointed authors, like myself; who praised, deplored, and despised each other. The satisfaction we found in every celebrated writer’s attempts was inversely as their merits. I found that no genius in another could please me; my unfortunate paradoxes had entirely dried up that source of comfort. I could neither read nor write with satisfaction; for excellence in another was my aversion, and writing was my trade.

“In the midst of these gloomy reflections, as I was one day sitting on a bench in St. James’s Park, a young gentleman of distinction, who had been my intimate acquaintance at the uni-

versity, approached me. We saluted each other with some hesitation, he almost ashamed of being known to one who made so shabby an appearance, and I afraid of a repulse. But my suspicions soon vanished; for Ned Thornhill was, at the bottom, a very good-natured fellow."

"What did you say, George?" interrupted I. "Thornhill, was not that his name? it can certainly be no other than my landlord."—"Bless me," cried Mrs. Arnold, "is Mr. Thornhill so near a neighbour of yours? He has long been a friend in our family, and we expect a visit from him shortly."

"My friend's first care," continued my son, "was to alter my appearance by a very fine suit of his own clothes, and then I was admitted to his table upon the footing of half friend, half underling. My business was to attend him at auctions, to put him in spirits when he sat for his picture, to take the left hand in his chariot when not filled by another, and to assist at *tattering a kip*, as the phrase was, when he had a mind for a frolic. Besides this, I had twenty other little employments in the family. I was to do many small things without bidding; to carry the corkscrew; to stand godfather to all the butler's children; to sing when I was bid: to be never out of humour; always to be humble; and, if I could, to be very happy."

"In this honourable post, however, I was not without a rival. A captain of marines, who was formed for the place by nature, opposed me in my patron's affections. His mother had been laundress to a man of quality, and thus he early acquired a taste for pimping and pedigree. As this gentleman made it the study of his life to be acquainted with lords, though he was dismissed from several for his stupidity, yet he found many of them, who were as dull as himself, that permitted his assiduities. As flattery was his trade, he practised it with the easiest address imaginable; but it came awkward and stiff from me; and as every day my patron's desire of flattery increased, so every hour, being better acquainted with his defects, I became more unwilling to give it. Thus I was once more fairly going to give up the field to the captain, when my friend found occasion for my assistance. This was nothing less than to fight a duel for him, with a gentleman whose sister it was pretended he had used ill. I readily complied with his request; and though I see you are displeased at my conduct, yet, as it was a debt indispensably due to friend-

ship, I could not refuse. I undertook the affair, disarmed my antagonist, and soon after had the pleasure of finding that the lady was only a woman of the town, and the fellow her bully and a sharper. This piece of service was repaid with the warmest professions of gratitude; but as my friend was to leave town in a few days, he knew no other method of serving me, but by recommending me to his uncle Sir William Thornhill, and another nobleman of great distinction who enjoyed a post under the government. When he was gone, my first care was to carry his recommendatory letter to his uncle, a man whose character for every virtue was universal, yet just. I was received by his servants with the most hospitable smiles; for the looks of the domestics ever transmit their master's benevolence. Being shown into a grand apartment, where Sir William soon came to me, I delivered my message and letter, which he read, and after pausing some minutes, 'Pray, Sir,' cried he, 'inform me what you have done for my kinsman to deserve this warm recommendation? But I suppose, Sir, I guess your merits; you have fought for him; and so you would expect a reward from me for being the instrument of his vices. I wish, sincerely wish, that my present refusal may be some punishment for your guilt; but still more, that it may be some inducement to your repentance.' The severity of this rebuke I bore patiently, because I knew that it was just. My whole expectations now, therefore, lay in my letter to the great man. As the doors of the nobility are almost ever beset with beggars, all ready to thrust in some sly petition, I found it no easy matter to gain admittance. However, after bribing the servants with half my worldly fortune, I was at last shown into a spacious apartment, my letter being previously sent up for his lordship's inspection. During this anxious interval, I had full time to look round me. Every thing was grand and of happy contrivance: the paintings, the furniture, the gildings, petrified me with awe, and raised my idea of the owner. Ah, thought I to myself, how very great must the possessor of all these things be, who carries in his head the business of the state, and whose house displays half the wealth of a kingdom: sure his genius must be unfathomable! During these awful reflections, I heard a step come heavily forward. Ah, this is the great man himself! No, it was only a chambermaid. Another foot was heard soon after. This must be he! No, it was

only the great man's valet-de-chambre. At last his lordship actually made his appearance. 'Are you,' cried he, 'the bearer of this here letter?' I answered with a bow. 'I learn by this,' continued he, 'as how that'—But just at that instant a servant delivered him a card, and without taking further notice, he went out of the room, and left me to digest my own happiness at leisure. I saw no more of him, till told by a footman that his lordship was going to his coach at the door. Down I immediately followed, and joined my voice to that of three or four more, who came, like me, to petition for favours: his lordship, however, went too fast for us, and was gaining his chariot door with large strides, when I hallooed out to know if I was to have any reply. He was by this time got in, and muttered an answer, half of which I only heard, the other half was lost in the rattling of his chariot wheels. I stood for some time with my neck stretched out, in the posture of one that was listening to catch the glorious sounds, till, looking round me, I found myself alone at his lordship's gate.

"My patience," continued my son, "was now quite exhausted; stung with the thousand indignities I had met with, I was willing to cast myself away, and only wanted the gulf to receive me. I regarded myself as one of those vile things that nature designed should be thrown by into her lumber-room, there to perish in obscurity. I had still, however, half a guinea left; and of that I thought fortune herself should not deprive me: but in order to be sure of this, I was resolved to go instantly and spend it while I had it, and then trust to occurrences for the rest. As I was going along with this resolution, it happened that Mr. Crispe's office seemed invitingly open to give me a welcome reception. In this office Mr. Crispe kindly offers all his Majesty's subjects a generous promise of thirty pounds a year, for which promise all they give in return is their liberty for life, and permission to let him transport them to America as slaves. I was happy to find a place where I could lose my fears in desperation, and entered this cell, for it had the appearance of one, with the devotion of a monastic. Here I found a number of poor creatures all in circumstances like myself, expecting the arrival of Mr. Crispe, presenting a true epitome of English impatience. Each untractable soul, at variance with fortune, wreaked her injuries on their own hearts: but Mr. Crispe at last came down,

and all our murmurs were hushed. He deigned to regard me with an air of peculiar approbation, and indeed he was the first man who for a month past talked to me with smiles. After a few questions, he found I was fit for every thing in the world. He paused awhile upon the properest means of providing for me, and slapping his forehead, as if he had found it, assured me, that there was at that time an embassy talked of from the synod of Pennsylvania to the Chickasaw Indians, and that he would use his interest to get me made secretary. I knew in my own heart that the fellow lied, and yet his promise gave me pleasure, there was something so magnificent in the sound. I fairly, therefore, divided my half guinea, one half of which went to be added to his thirty thousand pounds, and with the other half I resolved to go to the next tavern, to be there more happy than he.

“As I was going out with that resolution, I was met at the door by the captain of a ship, with whom I had formerly some little acquaintance, and he agreed to be my companion over a bowl of punch. As I never chose to make a secret of my circumstances, he assured me that I was upon the very point of ruin, in listening to the office-keeper’s promises : for that he only designed to sell me to the plantations. ‘But,’ continued he, ‘I fancy you might, by a much shorter voyage, be very easily put into a genteel way of bread. Take my advice. My ship sails to-morrow for Amsterdam : what if you go in her as a passenger ? The moment you land, all you have to do is to teach the Dutchmen English, and I’ll warrant you’ll get pupils and money enough. I suppose you understand English, added he, by this time, or the deuce is in it. I confidently assured him of that ; but expressed a doubt whether the Dutch would be willing to learn English. He affirmed with an oath that they were fond of it to distraction ; and upon that affirmation I agreed with his proposal, and embarked the next day to teach the Dutch English in Holland. The wind was fair, our voyage short ; and after having paid my passage with half my moveables, I found myself, as fallen from the skies, a stranger in one of the principal streets of Amsterdam. In this situation I was unwilling to let any time pass unemployed in teaching. I addressed myself, therefore, to two or three of those I met, whose appearance seemed most promising ; but it was impossible to make ourselves mutually understood. It was not till this very moment I recollected, that

in order to teach Dutchmen English, it was necessary that they should first teach me Dutch. How I came to overlook so obvious an objection, is to me amazing; but certain it is I overlooked it.

This scheme thus blown up, I had some thoughts of fairly shipping back to England again; but falling into company with an Irish student, who was returning from Louvain, our conversation turned upon topics of literature (for by the way it may be observed, that I always forgot the meanness of my circumstances when I could converse on such subjects); from him I learned that there were not two men in his whole university who understood Greek. This amazed me. I instantly resolved to travel to Louvain, and there live by teaching Greek; and in this design I was heartened by my brother student, who threw out some hints that a fortune might be got by it.

"I set out boldly forward the next morning. Every day lessened the burden of my moveables, like *Æsop* and his basket of bread; for I paid them for my lodgings to the Dutch as I travelled on. When I came to Louvain, I was resolved not to go sneaking to the lower professors, but openly tendered my talents to the principal himself. I went, had admittance, and offered him my service as a master of the Greek language, which I had been told was a desideratum in his university. The principal seemed at first to doubt of my abilities; but of these I offered to convince him, by turning a part of any Greek author he should fix upon into Latin. Finding me perfectly earnest in my proposal, he addressed me thus: 'You see me, young man. I never learned Greek, and I don't find that I ever missed it. I have had a doctor's cap and gown without Greek: I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek; I eat heartily without Greek; and in short,' continued he, 'as I don't know Greek, I do not believe there is any good in it.'

"I was now too far from home to think of returning; so I resolved to go forward. I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice; and I now turned what once was my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of Flanders, and among such of the French as were poor enough to be very merry; for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant's house towards nightfall, I played one of my most

merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day. I once or twice attempted to play for people of fashion; but they always thought my performance odious, and never rewarded me even with a trifle. This was to me the more extraordinary, as whenever I used in better days to play for company, when playing was my amusement, my music never failed to throw them into raptures, and the ladies especially; but as it was now my only means, it was received with contempt: a proof how ready the world is to underrate those talents by which a man is supported.

“In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no design but just to look about me, and then to go forward. The people of Paris are much fonder of strangers that have money, than of those that have wit. As I could not boast much of either, I was no great favourite. After walking about the town four or five days, and seeing the outsides of the best houses, I was preparing to leave this retreat of venal hospitality, when, passing through one of the principal streets, whom should I meet but our cousin, to whom you first recommended me! This meeting was very agreeable to me, and I believe not displeasing to him. He inquired into the nature of my journey to Paris, and informed me of his own business there, which was to collect pictures, medals, intaglios, and antiques of all kinds, for a gentleman in London, who had just stepped into taste and a large fortune. I was the more surprised at seeing our cousin pitched upon for this office, as he himself had often assured me he knew nothing of the matter. Upon asking how he had been taught the art of a *connoisseur* so very suddenly, he assured me that nothing was more easy. The whole secret consisted in a strict adherence to two rules: the one always to observe that the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains; and the other, to praise the works of Pietro Perugino. ‘But,’ says he, ‘as I once taught you how to be an author in London, I’ll now undertake to instruct you in the art of picture-buying in Paris.’

“With this proposal I very readily closed, as it was living; and now all my ambition was to live. I went therefore to his lodgings, improved my dress by his assistance, and, after some time, accompanied him to auctions of pictures, where the English gentry were expected to be purchasers. I was not a little surprised at his intimacy with people of the best fashion, who

referred themselves to his judgment, upon every picture or medal, as an unerring standard of taste. He made very good use of my assistance upon those occasions; for when asked his opinion, he would gravely take me aside and ask mine, shrug, look wise, return, and assure the company that he could give no opinion upon an affair of so much importance. Yet there was sometimes an occasion for a more supported assurance: I remember to have seen him, after giving his opinion that the colouring of a picture was not mellow enough, very deliberately take a brush with brown varnish that was accidentally lying by, and rub it over the piece with great composure before all the company, and then ask if he had not improved the tints.

“When he had finished his commission in Paris, he left me strongly recommended to several men of distinction, as a person very proper for a travelling tutor; and after some time, I was employed in that capacity by a gentleman who brought his ward to Paris, in order to set him forward on his tour through Europe. I was to be the young gentleman’s governor, but with a proviso that he should always be permitted to govern himself. My pupil, in fact, understood the art of guiding in money concerns much better than I. He was heir to a fortune of about two hundred thousand pounds, left him by an uncle in the West Indies; and his guardians, to qualify him for the management of it, had bound him apprentice to an attorney. Thus avarice was his prevailing passion; all his questions on the road were, how much money might be saved; which was the least expensive course of travelling; whether any thing could be bought that would turn to account when disposed of again in London. Such curiosities on the way as could be seen for nothing, he was ready enough to look at; but if the sight of them was to be paid for, he usually asserted that he had been told they were not worth seeing. He never paid a bill, that he would not observe how amazingly expensive travelling was; and all this though he was not yet twenty-one. When arrived at Leghorn, as we took a walk to look at the port and shipping, he inquired the expense of the passage by sea home to England. This he was informed was but a trifle, compared to his returning by land; he was therefore unable to withstand the temptation; so paying the small part of my salary that was due, he took leave, and embarked with only one attendant for London.

"I now, therefore, was left once more upon the world at large; but then it was a thing I was used to. However, my skill in music could avail me nothing in a country where every peasant was a better musician than I; but by this time I had acquired another talent, which answered my purpose as well, and this was a skill in disputation. In all the foreign universities and convents, there is upon certain days a philosophical thesis maintained against every adventitious disputant; for which, if the champion opposes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In this manner, therefore, I fought my way towards England, walked along from city to city, examined mankind more nearly, and, if I may so express it, saw both sides of the picture. My remarks, however, are but few: I found that monarchy was the best government for the poor to live in, and commonwealths for the rich. I found that riches in general were in every country another name for freedom; and that no man is so fond of liberty himself, as not to be desirous of subjecting the will of some individuals in society to his own.

"Upon my arrival in England, I resolved to pay my respects first to you, and then to enlist as a volunteer in the first expedition that was going forward; but on my journey down, my resolutions were changed by meeting an old acquaintance, who I found belonged to a company of comedians, that were going to make a summer campaign in the country. The company seemed not much to disapprove of me for an associate: they all, however, apprised me of the importance of the task at which I aimed; that the public was a many-headed monster, and that only such as had very good heads could please it; that acting was not to be learned in a day; and that without some traditional shrugs, which had been on the stage, and only on the stage, these hundred years, I could never pretend to please. The next difficulty was in fitting me with parts, as almost every character was in keeping. I was driven for some time from one character to another, till at last Horatio was fixed upon, which the presence of the present company has happily hindered me from acting."

CHAPTER XXI.

The short continuance of friendship amongst the vicious, which is coeval only with mutual satisfaction.

My son's account was too long to be delivered at once; the first part of it was begun that night, and he was concluding the rest after dinner the next day, when the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at the door seemed to make a pause in the general satisfaction. The butler, who was now become my friend in the family, informed me with a whisper, that the squire had already made some overtures to Miss Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle seemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr. Thornhill's entering, he seemed, at seeing my son and me, to start back; but I readily imputed that to surprise, and not displeasure. However, upon our advancing to salute him, he returned our greeting with the most apparent candour; and after a short time his presence served only to increase the general good humour.

After tea, he called me aside, to inquire after my daughter; but, upon my informing him that my inquiry was unsuccessful, he seemed greatly surprised; adding, that he had been since frequently at my house, in order to comfort the rest of my family, whom he left perfectly well. He then asked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miss Wilmot or my son; and upon my replying that I had not told them as yet, he greatly approved my prudence and precaution, desiring me by all means to keep it a secret: "For, at best," cried he, "it is but divulging one's own infamy; and perhaps Miss Livy may not be so guilty as we all imagine."

We were here interrupted by a servant, who came to ask the squire in, to stand up at country dances; so that he left me quite pleased with the interest he seemed to take in my concerns. His addresses, however, to Miss Wilmot, were too obvious to

be mistaken : and yet she seemed not perfectly pleased, but bore them rather in compliance to the will of her aunt, than from real inclination. I had even the satisfaction to see her lavish some kind looks upon my unfortunate son, which the other could neither extort by his fortune nor assiduity. Mr. Thornhill's seeming composure, however, not a little surprised me. We had now continued here a week, at the pressing instances of Mr. Arnold; but each day, the more tenderness Miss Wilmot showed my son, Mr. Thornhill's friendship seemed proportionably to increase for him.

He had formerly made us the most kind assurances of using his interest to serve the family; but now his generosity was not confined to promises alone : the morning I designed for my departure, Mr. Thornhill came to me with looks of real pleasure, to inform me of a piece of service he had done for his friend George. This was nothing less than his having procured him an ensign's commission in one of the regiments that was going to the West Indies, for which he had promised but one hundred pounds, his interest having been sufficient to get an abatement of the other two : "As for this trifling piece of service," continued the young gentleman, "I desire no other reward but the pleasure of having served my friend; and, as for the hundred pounds to be paid, if you are unable to raise it yourselves, I will advance it, and you shall repay me at your leisure." This was a favour we wanted words to express our sense of: I readily, therefore, gave my bond for the money, and testified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day, to secure his commission, in pursuance of his generous patron's directions, who judged it highly expedient to use dispatch, lest in the mean time another should step in with more advantageous proposals. The next morning, therefore, our young soldier was early prepared for his departure, and seemed the only person among us that was not affected by it. Neither the fatigues and dangers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and mistress (for Miss Wilmot actually loved him) he was leaving behind, any way damped his spirits. After he had taken leave of the rest of the company, I gave him all that I had, my blessing. "And now, my boy," cried I, "thou art going to fight for thy country, remember how thy brave grandfather fought for his sacred king,

when loyalty among Britons was a virtue. Go, my boy, and imitate him in all but his misfortunes,—if it was a misfortune to die with Lord Falkland. Go, my boy; and if you fall, though distant, exposed and unwept by those that love you, the most precious tears are those with which Heaven bedews the unburied head of a soldier.”

The next morning I took leave of the good family that had been kind enough to entertain me so long, not without several expressions of gratitude to Mr. Thornhill for his late bounty. I left them in the enjoyment of all that happiness which affluence and good-breeding procure; and returned towards home, despairing of ever finding my daughter more, but sending a sigh to Heaven to spare and to forgive her. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired a horse to carry me, as I was yet but weak, and comforted myself with the hopes of soon seeing all I held dearest upon earth. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public-house by the road side, and asked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. We sat beside his kitchen-fire, which was the best room in the house, and chatted on politics and the news of the country. We happened, among other topics, to talk of young Squire Thornhill, who, the host assured me, was hated as much as his uncle Sir William, who sometimes came down into the country, was loved. He went on to observe, that he made it his whole study to betray the daughters of such as received him to their houses, and, after a fortnight or three weeks possession, turned them out unrewarded and abandoned to the world. As we continued our discourse in this manner, his wife, who had been out to get change, returned, and perceiving her husband was enjoying a pleasure in which she was not a sharer, she asked him, in an angry tone, what he did there; to which he only replied, in an ironical way, by drinking her health. “Mr. Symonds,” cried she, “you use me very ill, and I'll bear it no longer. Here three parts of the business is left for me to do, and the fourth left unfinished; while you do nothing but soak with the guests all day long; whereas, if a spoonful of liquor were to cure me of a fever, I never touch a drop.” I now found what she would be at, and immediately poured her out a glass, which she received with a courtesy, and, drinking towards my good health, “Sir,” resumed she, “it is not so much for the value of the liquor I am

angry, but one cannot help it when the house is going out of the windows. If the customers are to be dunned, all the burthen lies upon my back; he'd as lief eat that glass as budge after them himself. There now, above stairs, we have a young woman, who has come to take up her lodgings here, and I don't believe she has got any money, by her over-civility. I am certain she is very slow of payment, and I wish she were put in mind of it."—"What signifies minding her?" cried the host; "if she be slow, she is sure."—"I don't know that," replied the wife; "but I know that I am sure she has been here a fortnight, and we have not yet seen the cross of her money."—"I suppose, my dear," cried he, "we shall have it all in a lump."—"In a lump!" cried the other, "I hope we may get it any way; and that I am resolved we will this very night, or out she tramps, bag and baggage."—"Consider, my dear," cried the husband, "she is a gentlewoman, and deserves more respect."—"As for the matter of that," returned the hostess, "gentle or simple, out she shall pack with a sassarara. Gentry may be good things where they take; but for my part, I never saw much good of them at the sign of the Harrow."—Thus saying, she ran up a narrow flight of stairs that went from the kitchen to a room over head, and I soon perceived, by the loudness of her voice, and the bitterness of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger. I could hear her remonstrances very distinctly: "Out, I say, pack out this moment! tramp, thou infamous strumpet! or I'll give thee a mark thou won't be the better for these three months. What, you trumpery! to come and take up an honest house without cross or coin to bless yourself with; come along, I say."—"O dear madam," cried the stranger, "pity me! pity a poor abandoned creature for one night, and death will soon do the rest."—I instantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child Olivia. I flew to her rescue, while the woman was dragging her along by the hair, and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.—"Welcome, any way welcome, my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father's bosom. Though the vicious forsake thee, there is yet one in the world that will never forsake thee; though thou hadst ten thousand crimes to answer for, he will forget them all."—"O my own dear,"—for some minutes she could say no more—"my own dearest good papa! Could angels be kinder? How

do I deserve so much? The villain, I hate him and myself, to be a reproach to such goodness. You can't forgive me; I know you cannot."—"Yes, my child, from my heart I do forgive thee! Only repent, and we both shall yet be happy. We shall see many pleasant days yet, my Olivia."—"Ah! never, Sir, never! The rest of my wretched life must be infamy abroad, and shame at home. But, alas! papa, you look much paler than you used to do. Could such a thing as I am give you so much uneasiness? Surely you have too much wisdom to take the miseries of my guilt upon yourself."—"Our wisdom, young woman," replied I.—"Ah! why so cold a name, papa?" cried she. "This is the first time you ever called me by so cold a name."—"I ask pardon, my darling," returned I; "but I was going to observe, that wisdom makes but a slow defence against trouble, though at last a sure one."

The landlady now returned to know if we did not choose a more genteel apartment; to which assenting, we were shown to a room where we could converse more freely. After we had talked ourselves into some degree of tranquillity, I could not avoid desiring some account of the gradations that led to her present wretched situation. "That villain, Sir," said she, "from the first day of our meeting, made me honourable, though private, proposals."

"Villain, indeed," cried I; "and yet it in some measure surprises me, how a person of Mr. Burchell's good sense and seeming honour could be guilty of such deliberate baseness, and thus step into a family to undo it."

"My dear papa," returned my daughter, "you labour under a strange mistake. Mr. Burchell never attempted to deceive me. Instead of that, he took every opportunity of privately admonishing me against the artifices of Mr. Thornhill, who I now find was even worse than he represented him."

"Mr. Thornhill!" interrupted I; "can it be?"—"Yes, Sir," returned she, "it was Mr. Thornhill who seduced me; who employed the two ladies, as he called them, but who, in fact, were abandoned women of the town, without breeding or pity, to decoy us up to London. Their artifices, you may remember, would have certainly succeeded, but for Mr. Burchell's letter, who directed those reproaches at them, which we all applied to ourselves. How he came to have so much influence as to defeat

their intentions, still remains a secret to me; but I am convinced he was ever our warmest, sincerest friend."

"You amaze me, my dear," cried I; "but now I find my first suspicions of Mr. Thornhill's baseness were too well grounded: but he can triumph in security; for he is rich, and we are poor. But tell me, my child, sure it was no small temptation that could thus obliterate all the impressions of such an education, and so virtuous a disposition, as thine?"

"Indeed, Sir," replied she, "he owes all his triumph to the desire I had of making him, and not myself, happy. I knew that the ceremony of our marriage, which was privately performed by a popish priest, was no way binding, and that I had nothing to trust to but his honour."—"What," interrupted I, "and were you indeed married by a priest in orders?"—"Indeed, Sir, we were," replied she, "though we were both sworn to conceal his name."—"Why then, my child, come to my arms again; and now you are a thousand times more welcome than before, for you are his wife to all intents and purposes; nor can all the laws of man, though written upon tables of adamant, lessen the force of that sacred connexion."

"Alas, papa," replied she, "you are but little acquainted with his villainies: he has been married already, by the same priest, to six or eight wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and abandoned."

"Has he so?" cried I, "then we must hang the priest; and you shall inform against him to-morrow."—"But, Sir," returned she, "will that be right, when I am sworn to secrecy?"—"My dear," I replied, "if you have made such a promise, I cannot, nor will I tempt you to break it: even though it may benefit the public, you must not inform against him. In all human institutions, a smaller evil is allowed to procure a greater good; as in politics, a province may be given away to secure a kingdom; in medicine, a limb may be lopped off, to preserve the body. But in religion, the law is written, and inflexible, *never* to do evil; and this law, my child, is right; for otherwise, if we commit a smaller evil to procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus incurred, in expectation of contingent advantage: and though the advantage should certainly follow, yet the interval between commission and advantage, which is allowed to be guilty, may be that in which we are called away

to answer for the things we have done, and the volume of human actions is closed for ever. But I interrupt you, my dear; go on."

"The very next morning," continued she, "I found what little expectations I was to have from his sincerity. That very morning he introduced me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too tenderly to bear such rivals in his affections, and strove to forget my infamy in a tumult of pleasures. With this view, I danced, dressed, and talked; but still was unhappy. The gentlemen who visited there told me every minute of the power of my charms; and this only contributed to increase my melancholy, as I had thrown all their power quite away. Thus each day I grew more pensive, and he more insolent; till at last the monster had the assurance to offer me to a young baronet of his acquaintance. Need I describe, Sir, how his ingratitude stung me. My answer to this proposal was almost madness.—I desired to part. As I was going, he offered me a purse; but I flung it at him with indignation, and burst from him in a rage, that for a while kept me insensible of the miseries of my situation. But I soon looked round me, and saw myself a vile, abject, guilty thing, without one friend in the world to apply to. Just in that interval, a stage-coach happening to pass by, I took a place, it being my only aim to be driven at a distance from a wretch I despised and detested. I was set down here, where since my arrival, my own anxiety, and this woman's unkindness, have been my only companions. The hours of pleasure that I have passed with my mamma and sister now grow painful to me: their sorrows are much, but mine are greater than theirs; for mine are mixed with guilt and infamy."

"Have patience, my child," cried I, "and I hope things will yet be better. Take some repose to-night, and to-morrow I'll carry you home to your mother and the rest of the family, from whom you will receive a kind reception. Poor woman! this has gone to her heart; but she loves you still, Olivia, and will forget it."

CHAPTER XXII.

Offences are easily pardoned, where there is love at bottom.

THE next morning, I took my daughter behind me, and set out on my return home. As we travelled along, I strove, by every persuasion, to calm her sorrows and fears, and to arm her with resolution to bear the presence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the prospect of a fine country through which we passed, to observe how much kinder heaven was to us, than we to each other; and that the misfortunes of Nature's making were very few. I assured her, that she should never perceive any change in my affections, and that during my life, which yet might be long, she might depend upon a guardian and an instructor. I armed her against the censures of the world, showed her that books were sweet unrepublishing companions to the miserable, and that, if they could not bring us to enjoy life, they would at least teach us to endure it.

The hired horse that we rode was to be put up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles from my house; and as I was willing to prepare my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to return for her, accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night before we reached our appointed stage; however, after seeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered the hostess to prepare proper refreshments, I kissed her, and proceeded towards home. And now my heart caught new sensations of pleasure, the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that had been frightened from its nest, my affections outwent my haste, and hovered round my little fireside, with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I

walked but slowly, the night waned apace. The labourers of the day were all retired to rest; the lights were out in every cottage; no sounds were heard but of the shrilling cock and the deep-mouthed watch-dog at hollow distance. I approached my little abode of pleasure, and before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near midnight that I came to knock at my door; all was still and silent; my heart dilated with unutterable happiness, when, to my amazement, I saw the house bursting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration! I gave a loud convulsive outcry, and fell upon the pavement insensible. This alarmed my son, who had till this been asleep, and he, perceiving the flames, instantly waked my wife and daughter, and all running out, naked and wild with apprehension, recalled me to life with their anguish. But it was only to objects of new terror; for the flames had by this time caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family stood with silent agony, looking on, as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them, and upon it by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones; but they were not to be seen. "O misery! Where," cried I, "where are my little ones?"—"They are burned to death in the flames," said my wife, calmly, "and I will die with them."—That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were just awaked by the fire, and nothing could have stopped me. "Where, where are my children?" cried I, rushing through the flames, and bursting the door of the chamber in which they were confined. "Where are my little ones?"—"Here, dear papa, here we are," cried they together, while the flames were just catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and snatched them through the fire as fast as possible, while, just as I was got out, the roof sunk in. "Now," cried I, holding up my children, "now let the flames burn on, and all my possessions perish. Here they are, I have saved my treasure. Here, my dearest; here are our treasures, and we shall yet be happy." We kissed our little darlings a thousand times; they clasped us round the neck, and seemed to share our transports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now stood a calm spectator of the flames, and, after some time, began to perceive that my arm to the shoulder was scorched

in a terrible manner. It was therefore out of my power to give my son any assistance, either in attempting to save our goods, or preventing the flames spreading to our corn. By this time, the neighbours were alarmed, and came running to our assistance; but all they could do was to stand, like us, spectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reserved for my daughters' fortunes, were entirely consumed, except a box, with some papers, that stood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little consequence, which my son brought away in the beginning. The neighbours contributed, however, what they could to lighten our distress. They brought us clothes, and furnished one of our outhouses with kitchen utensils; so that by daylight we had another, though a wretched, dwelling to retire to. My honest next neighbour and his children were not the least assiduous in providing us with every thing necessary, and offering whatever consolation untutored benevolence could suggest.

When the fears of my family had subsided, curiosity to know the cause of my long stay began to take place; having therefore informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the reception of our lost one; and though we had nothing but wretchedness now to impart, I was willing to procure her a welcome to what we had. This task would have been more difficult but for our own recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's pride, and blunted it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myself, as my arm grew very painful, I sent my son and daughter, who soon returned, supporting the wretched delinquent, who had not the courage to look up at her mother, whom no instructions of mine could persuade to a perfect reconciliation; for women have a much stronger sense of female error than men. "Ah, madam," cried her mother, "this is but a poor place you are come to, after so much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can afford but little entertainment to persons who have kept company only with people of distinction. Yes, Miss Livy, your poor father and I have suffered very much of late; but I hope Heaven will forgive you."—During this reception, the unhappy victim stood pale and trembling, unable to weep or to reply: but I could not continue a silent spectator of her distress; wherefore, assuming a degree of severity in my voice and manner, which was ever followed

with instant submission, "I entreat, woman, that my words may be now marked once for all: I have here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer; her return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness. The real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us; let us not, therefore, increase them by dissension among each other. If we live harmoniously together, we may yet be contented, as there are enough of us to shut out the censuring world, and keep each other in countenance. The kindness of heaven is promised to the penitent, and let ours be directed by the example. Heaven, we are assured, is much more pleased to view a repentant sinner, than ninety-nine persons who have supported a course of undeviating rectitude. And this is right; for that single effort by which we stop short in the downhill path to perdition, is itself a greater exertion of virtue than a hundred acts of justice."

CHAPTER XXIII.

None but the guilty can be long and completely miserable.

SOME assiduity was now required to make our present abode as convenient as possible, and we were soon again qualified to enjoy our former serenity. Being disabled myself from assisting my son in our usual occupations, I read to my family from the few books that were saved, and particularly from such as, by amusing the imagination, contributed to ease the heart. Our good neighbours, too, came every day with the kindest condolence, and fixed a time in which they were all to assist in repairing my former dwelling. Honest farmer Williams was not last among these visitors; but heartily offered his friendship. He would even have renewed his addresses to my daughter; but she rejected them in such a manner as totally repressed his future solicitations. Her grief seemed formed for continuing, and she was the only person of our little society that a week did not restore to cheerfulness. She now lost that unblushing

innocence which once taught her to respect herself, and to seek pleasure by pleasing. Anxiety had now taken strong possession of her mind, her beauty began to be impaired with her constitution, and neglect still more contributed to diminish it. Every tender epithet bestowed on her sister brought a pang to her heart and a tear to her eye; and as one vice, though cured, ever plants others where it has been, so her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealousy and envy behind. I strove a thousand ways to lessen her care, and even forgot my own pain in a concern for hers, collecting such amusing passages of history as a strong memory and some reading could suggest. "Our happiness, my dear," I would say, "is in the power of one who can bring it about in a thousand unforeseen ways that mock our foresight. If example be necessary to prove this, I'll give you a story, my child, told us by a grave, though sometimes a romancing historian.

"Matilda was married very young to a Neapolitan nobleman of the first quality, and found herself a widow and a mother at the age of fifteen. As she stood one day caressing her infant son in the open window of an apartment which hung over the river Volturna, the child, with a sudden spring, leaped from her arms into the flood below, and disappeared in a moment. The mother, struck with instant surprise, and making an effort to save him, plunged in after; but, far from being able to assist the infant, she herself with great difficulty escaped to the opposite shore, just when some French soldiers were plundering the country on that side, who immediately made her their prisoner.

"As the war was then carried on between the French and Italians with the utmost inhumanity, they were going at once to perpetrate those two extremes suggested by appetite and cruelty. This base resolution, however, was opposed by a young officer, who, though their retreat required the utmost expedition, placed her behind him, and brought her in safety to his native city. Her beauty at first caught his eye, her merit soon after his heart. They were married: he rose to the highest posts; they lived long together, and were happy. But the felicity of a soldier can never be called permanent: after an interval of several years, the troops which he commanded having met with a repulse, he was obliged to take shelter in the city where he had lived with his wife. Here they suffered a siege, and the city at length was

taken. Few histories can produce more various instances of cruelty, than those which the French and Italians at that time exercised upon each other. It was resolved by the victors, upon this occasion, to put all the French prisoners to death ; but particularly the husband of the unfortunate Matilda, as he was principally instrumental in protracting the siege. Their determinations were in general executed almost as soon as resolved upon. The captive soldier was led forth, and the executioner, with his sword, stood ready, while the spectators in gloomy silence awaited the fatal blow, which was only suspended till the general, who presided as judge, should give the signal. It was in this interval of anguish and expectation, that Matilda came to take her last farewell of her husband and deliverer, deploring her wretched situation, and the cruelty of fate, that had saved her from perishing by a premature death in the river Volturna, to be the spectator of still greater calamities. The general, who was a young man, was struck with surprise at her beauty, and pity at her distress ; but with still stronger emotions when he heard her mention her former dangers. He was her son ; the infant for whom she had encountered so much danger. He acknowledged her at once as his mother, and fell at her feet. The rest may be easily supposed : the captive was set free, and all the happiness that love, friendship, and duty could confer on earth, were united."

In this manner I would attempt to amuse my daughter ; but she listened with divided attention : for her own misfortunes engrossed all the pity she once had for those of another, and nothing gave her ease. In company she dreaded contempt, and in solitude she only found anxiety. Such was the colour of her wretchedness, when we received certain information that Mr. Thornhill was going to be married to Miss Wilmot, for whom I always suspected he had a real passion, though he took every opportunity before me to express his contempt both of her person and fortune. This news only served to increase poor Olivia's affliction ; for such a flagrant breach of fidelity was more than her courage could support. I was resolved, however, to get more certain information, and to defeat, if possible, the completion of his designs, by sending my son to old Mr. Wilmot's, with instructions to know the truth of the report, and to deliver Miss Wilmot a letter intimating Mr. Thornhill's

conduct in my family. My son went, in pursuance of my directions, and in three days returned, assuring us of the truth of the account; but that he had found it impossible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr. Thornhill and Miss Wilmot were visiting round the country. They were to be married, he said, in a few days, having appeared together at church the Sunday before he was there, in great splendour, the bride attended by six young ladies, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they usually rode out together in the grandest equipage that had been seen in the country for many years. All the friends of both families, he said, were there; particularly the squire's uncle, Sir William Thornhill, who bore so good a character. He added, that nothing but mirth and feasting were going forward; that all the country praised the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine person; and that they were immensely fond of each other; concluding that he could not help thinking Mr. Thornhill one of the most happy men in the world.

"Why, let him if he can," returned I: "but, my son, observe this bed of straw and unsheltering roof; those mouldering walls and humid floor; my wretched body thus disabled by fire, and my children weeping round me for bread: you have come home, my child, to all this; yet here, even here, you see a man that would not for a thousand worlds exchange situations. O my children! if you could but learn to commune with your own hearts, and know what noble company you can make them, you would little regard the elegance and splendour of the worthless. Almost all men have been taught to call life a passage, and themselves the travellers: the similitude still may be improved, when we observe that the good are joyful and serene, like travellers that are going towards home; the wicked but by intervals happy, like travellers that are going into exile."

My compassion for my poor daughter, overpowered by this new disaster, interrupted what I had further to observe. I bade her mother support her, and after a short time she recovered. She appeared from that time more calm, and I imagined had gained a new degree of resolution: but appearances deceived me; for her tranquillity was the languor of overwrought resentment. A supply of provisions, charitably sent us by my kind pa-

rishioners, seemed to diffuse new cheerfulness amongst the rest of the family, nor was I displeased at seeing them once more sprightly and at ease. It would have been unjust to damp their satisfactions, merely to condole with resolute melancholy, or to burthen them with a sadness they did not feel. Thus, once more, the tale went round and the song was demanded, and cheerfulness condescended to hover round our little habitation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Fresh Calamities.

THE next morning the sun arose with peculiar warmth for the season; so that we agreed to breakfast together on the honeysuckle bank: where, while we sat, my youngest daughter, at my request, joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was in this place my poor Olivia first met her seducer, and every object served to recall her sadness. But that melancholy, which is excited by objects of pleasure, or inspired by sounds of harmony, soothes the heart instead of corroding it. Her mother too, upon this occasion, felt a pleasing distress, and wept, and loved her daughter as before. "Do, my pretty Olivia," cried she, "let us have that little melancholy air your papa was so fond of; your sister Sophy has already obliged us. Do, child, it will please your old father." She complied in a manner so exquisitely pathetic, as moved me.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can sooth her melancholy?
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom, is—to die.

As she was concluding the last stanza, to which an interruption in her voice from sorrow gave peculiar softness, the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at a distance alarmed us all, but particularly increased the uneasiness of my eldest daughter, who, desirous of shunning her betrayer, returned to the house with her sister. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and making up to the place where I was still sitting, inquired after my health with his usual air of familiarity. "Sir," replied I, "your present assurance only serves to aggravate the baseness of your character; and there was a time when I would have chastised your insolence, for presuming thus to appear before me: but now you are safe; for age has cooled my passions, and my calling restrains them."

"I vow, my dear Sir," returned he, "I am amazed at all this; nor can I understand what it means! I hope you don't think your daughter's late excursion with me had any thing criminal in it."

"Go," cried I, "thou art a wretch, a poor pitiful wretch, and every way a liar! but your meanness secures you from my anger! Yet, Sir, I am descended from a family that would not have borne this! And so, thou vile thing, to gratify a momentary passion, thou hast made one poor creature wretched for life, and polluted a family that had nothing but honour for their portion."

"If she or you," returned he, "are resolved to be miserable, I cannot help it. But you may still be happy; and whatever opinion you may have formed of me, you shall ever find me ready to contribute to it. We can marry her to another in a short time, and what is more, she may keep her lover besides; for I protest I shall ever continue to have a true regard for her."

I found all my passions alarmed at this new degrading proposal; for though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villany can at any time get within the soul, and sting it into rage.—"Avoid my sight, thou reptile," cried I, "nor continue to insult me with thy presence. Were my brave son at home, he would not suffer this; but I am old and disabled, and every way undone."

"I find," cried he, "you are bent upon obliging me to talk in a harsher manner than I intended. But as I have shown you what may be hoped from my friendship, it may not be improper to present what may be the consequences of my resentment. My

attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens hard; nor do I know how to prevent the course of justice, except by paying the money myself, which, as I have been at some expenses lately, previous to my intended marriage, is not so easy to be done. And then, my steward talks of driving for the rent: it is certain he knows his duty, for I never trouble myself with affairs of that nature. Yet still I could wish to serve you, and even to have you and your daughter present at my marriage, which is shortly to be solemnized with Miss Wilmot; it is even the request of my charming Arabella herself, whom I hope you will not refuse."

"Mr. Thornhill," replied I, "hear me once for all: as to your marriage with any but my daughter, that I never will consent to; and though your friendship could raise me to a throne, or your resentment sink me to the grave, yet would I despise both. Thou hast once wofully, irreparably, deceived me. I reposed my heart upon thine honour, and have found its baseness; never more, therefore, expect friendship from me. Go! and possess what fortune has given thee, beauty, riches, health, and pleasure: go, and leave me to want, infamy, disease, and sorrow. Yet, humbled as I am, shall my heart still vindicate its dignity; and though thou hast my forgiveness, thou shalt ever have my contempt."

"If so," returned he, "depend upon it you shall feel the effects of this insolence; and we shall shortly see which is the fittest object of scorn, you or me." Upon which he departed abruptly.

My wife and son, who were present at this interview, seemed terrified with apprehension. My daughters also, finding that he was gone, came out, to be informed of the result of our conference; which, when known, alarmed them not less than the rest: but as to myself, I disregarded the utmost stretch of his malevolence: he had already struck the blow, and I now stood prepared to repel every new effort: like one of those instruments used in the art of war, which, however thrown, till presents a point to receive the enemy.

We soon, however, found that he had not threatened in vain; for the very next morning his steward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay: the consequence of my incapacity was, his driving away my cattle that evening, and their being appraised and

sold the next day for less than half their value. My wife and children now, therefore, entreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than incur certain destruction. They even begged of me to admit his visits once more, and used all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure:—the terrors of a prison in so rigorous a season as the present, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

“Why, my treasures,” cried I, “why will you thus attempt to persuade me to the thing that is not right? My duty has taught me to forgive him; but my conscience will not permit me to approve. Would you have me applaud to the world what my heart must internally condemn? Would you have me tamely sit down and flatter our infamous betrayer; and to avoid a prison, continually suffer the more galling bonds of mental confinement? No, never! If we are to be taken from this abode, only let us hold to the right, and wherever we are thrown, we can still retire to a charming apartment, where we can look round our own hearts with intrepidity and with pleasure!”

In this manner we spent that evening: early the next morning, as the snow had fallen in great abundance in the night, my son was employed in clearing it away, and opening a passage before the door. He had not been thus engaged long, when he came running in, with looks all pale, to tell us that two strangers, whom he knew to be officers of justice, were making towards the house.

Just as he spoke, they came in; and approaching the bed where I lay, after previously informing me of their employment and business, made me their prisoner, bidding me prepare to go with them to the county jail, which was eleven miles off.

“My friends,” said I, “this is severe weather in which you are come to take me to a prison; and it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one of my arms has lately been burned in a terrible manner, and it has thrown me into a slight fever, and I want clothes to cover me, and I am now too weak and old to walk far in such deep snow: but if it must be so——”

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I entreated them to be expeditious, and desired my son to assist his eldest sister, who, from a con-

sciousness that she was the cause of all our calamities, was fallen, and had lost anguish in insensibility. I encouraged my wife, who, pale and trembling, clasped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her bosom in silence, dreading to look round at the strangers. In the mean time, my youngest daughter prepared for our departure; and as she received several hints to use dispatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.

CHAPTER XXV.

No situation, however wretched it seems, but has some sort of comfort attending it.

WE set forward from this peaceful neighbourhood, and walked on slowly. My eldest daughter, being enfeebled by a slow fever, which had begun for some days to undermine her constitution, one of the officers, who had a horse, kindly took her behind him; for even these men cannot entirely divest themselves of humanity. My son led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other; while I leaned upon my youngest girl, whose tears fell not for her own, but my distresses.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we saw a crowd running and shouting behind us, consisting of about fifty of my poorest parishioners. These, with dreadful imprecations, soon seized upon the two officers of justice, and swearing they would never see their minister go to jail while they had a drop of blood to shed in his defence, were going to use them with great severity. The consequences might have been fatal, had I not immediately interposed, and with some difficulty rescued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery now as certain, appeared transported with joy, and were incapable of containing their raptures. But they were soon undeceived, upon hearing me address the poor deluded people, who came, as they imagined, to do me service.

"What! my friends," cried I, "and is this the way you love me? Is this the manner you obey the instructions I have given you from the pulpit? thus to fly in the face of justice, and bring down ruin on yourselves and me! Which is your ringleader? show me the man that has seduced you: as sure as he lives he shall feel my resentment. Alas! my dear deluded flock, return back to the duty you owe to God, to your country, and to me. I shall yet, perhaps, one day see you in greater felicity here, and contribute to make your lives more happy. But let it at least be my comfort, when I pen my fold for immortality, that not one here shall be wanting."

They now seemed all repentance, and melting into tears, came one after the other to bid me farewell. I shook each tenderly by the hand, and, leaving them my blessing, proceeded forward without meeting any further interruption. Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather village; for it consisted but of a few mean houses, having lost all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its ancient superiority but the jail.

Upon entering we put up at an inn, where we had such refreshments as could most readily be procured, and I supped with my family with my usual cheerfulness. After seeing them properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the sheriff's officers to the prison, which had formerly been built for the purposes of war, and consisted of one large apartment, strongly grated, and paved with stone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four-and-twenty. Besides this, every prisoner had a separate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

I expected on my entrance to find nothing but lamentations and various sounds of misery; but it was very different. The prisoners seemed all employed in one common design, that of forgetting thought in merriment or glamour. I was apprised of the usual perquisite required upon these occasions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhausted. This was immediately sent away for liquor, and the whole prison was soon filled with riot, laughter, and profaneness.

"How!" cried I to myself, "shall men so very wicked be cheerful, and shall I be melancholy? I feel only the same confinement with them, and I think I have more reason to be happy."

With such reflections I laboured to become cheerful; but cheerfulness was never yet produced by effort, which is itself painful. As I was sitting, therefore, in a corner of the jail, in a pensive posture, one of my fellow-prisoners came up, and sitting by me, entered into conversation. It was my constant rule in life, never to avoid the conversation of any man who seemed to desire it: for if good, I might profit by his instruction; if bad, he might be assisted by mine. I found this to be a knowing man, of strong unlettered sense, but a thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called, or, more properly speaking, of human nature on the wrong side. He asked me if I had taken care to provide myself with a bed, which was a circumstance I had never once attended to.

"That's unfortunate," cried he, "as you are allowed here nothing but straw, and your apartment is very large and cold. However, you seem to be something of a gentleman, and as I have been one myself in my time, part of my bed-clothes are heartily at your service."

I thanked him, professing my surprise at finding such humanity in a jail, in misfortunes; adding, to let him see that I was a scholar, that the sage ancient seemed to understand the value of company in affliction, when he said, "*Ton kosmon aire, ei dos tan etairon*"; and in fact," continued I, "what is the world, if it affords only solitude?"

"You talk of the world, Sir," returned my fellow-prisoner; "the world is in its dotage, and yet the cosmogony or creation of the world has puzzled the philosophers of every age. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world? Sanconiathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus have all attempted it in vain. The latter has these words: '*Anarchon ara kai atelutaion to pan*;' which implies"—"I ask pardon, Sir," cried I, "for interrupting so much learning; but I think I have heard all this before. Have I not had the pleasure of once seeing you at Wellbridge fair, and is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson?" At this demand he only sighed. "I suppose you must recollect," resumed I, "one Doctor Primrose, from whom you bought a horse?"

He now at once recollected me; for the gloominess of the place and the approaching night had prevented his distinguishing my features before.—"Yes, Sir," returned Mr. Jenkinson,

"I remember you perfectly well; I bought a horse, but forgot to pay for him. Your neighbour Flamborough is the only prosecutor I am any way afraid of at the next assizes; for he intends to swear positively against me as a coiner. I am heartily sorry, Sir, I ever deceived you, or indeed any man; for you see," continued he, showing his shackles, "what my tricks have brought me to."

"Well, Sir," replied I, "your kindness in offering me assistance, when you could expect no return, shall be repaid by my endeavours to soften or totally suppress Mr. Flamborough's evidence, and I will send my son to him for that purpose the first opportunity; nor do I in the least doubt but he will comply with my request; and as to my own evidence, you need be under no uneasiness about that."

"Well, Sir," cried he, "all the return I can make shall be yours. You shall have more than half my bed-clothes to-night, and I'll take care to stand your friend in the prison, where I think I have some influence."

I thanked him, and could not avoid being surprised at the present youthful change in his aspect; for at the time I had seen him before, he appeared at least sixty.—"Sir," answered he, "you are little acquainted with the world; I had at that time false hair, and have learned the art of counterfeiting every age from seventeen to seventy. Ah! Sir, had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade, that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day. But, rogue as I am, still I may be your friend; and that, perhaps, when you least expect it."

We were now prevented from further conversation, by the arrival of the jailer's servants, who came to call over the prisoners' names, and lock up for the night: a fellow also with a bundle of straw for my bed attended, who led me along a dark narrow passage into a room paved like the common prison, and in one corner of this I spread my bed, and the clothes given me by my fellow-prisoner; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good night. After my usual meditations, and having praised my heavenly corrector, I laid myself down, and slept with the utmost tranquillity till morning.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A reformation in the jail.—To make laws complete they should reward as well as punish.

THE next morning early I was awakened by my family, whom I found in tears at my bedside. The gloomy appearance of every thing about us, it seems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their sorrow, assuring them I had never slept with greater tranquillity; and next inquired after my eldest daughter, who was not among them. They informed me that yesterday's uneasiness and fatigue had increased her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to send my son to procure a room or two to lodge my family in, as near the prison as conveniently could be found. He obeyed; but could only find one apartment, which was hired at a small expense, for his mother and sisters; the jailer with humanity consenting to let him and his two little brothers lie in the prison with me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in a corner of the room, which I thought answered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previously to know whether my little children chose to lie in a place which seemed to fright them upon entrance.

"Well," cried I, "my good boys, how do you like your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lie in this room, dark as it appears."

"No, papa," says Dick, "I am not afraid to lie any where, where you are."

"And I," says Bill, who was yet but four years old, "love every place best that my papa is in."

After this, I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly directed to watch her declining sister's health; my wife was to attend me; my little boys were to read to me; "and as for you, my son," continued I, "it is by the labour of your hands we must all hope to be supported. Your wages, as a day-labourer, will be fully sufficient, with

proper frugality, to maintain us all, and comfortably too. Thou art now sixteen years old, and hast strength; and it was given thee, my son, for very useful purposes; for it must save from famine your helpless parents and family. Prepare then, this evening, to look out for work against to-morrow, and bring home every night what money you earn for our support."

Having thus instructed him, and settled the rest, I walked down to the common prison, where I could enjoy more air and room; but I was not long there, when the execrations, lewdness, and brutality, that invaded me on every side, drove me back to my apartment again. Here I sat for some time, pondering upon the strange infatuation of wretches, who, finding all mankind in open arms against them, were labouring to make themselves a future and a more tremendous enemy.

Their insensibility excited my highest compassion, and blotted my own uneasiness from my mind; it even appeared a duty incumbent upon me to attempt to reclaim them: I resolved, therefore, once more to return, and, in spite of their contempt, to give them my advice, and conquer them by perseverance. Going, therefore, among them again, I informed Mr. Jenkinson of my design, at which he laughed heartily, but communicated it to the rest. The proposal was received with the greatest good humour, as it promised to afford a new fund of entertainment to persons who had now no other resource for mirth, but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the service with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqued, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible that what I did might amend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any.

After reading, I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at first to amuse them than to reprove. I previously observed, that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; that I was their fellow prisoner, and now got nothing by preaching. I was sorry, I said, to hear them so very profane; because they got nothing by it, but might lose a great deal: "For be assured, my friends," cried I, "for you are my friends, however the world may disclaim your friendship, though

you swore twelve thousand oaths in a day; it would not put one penny in your purse. Then what signifies calling every moment upon the devil, and courting his friendship, since you find how scurvily he uses you? He has given you nothing here, you find, but a mouthful of oaths and an empty belly; and by the best accounts I have of him, he will give you nothing that's good hereafter.

"If used ill in our dealings with one man, we naturally go elsewhere. Were it not worth your while, then, just to try how you may like the usage of another master, who gives you fair promises at least to come to him? Surely, my friends, of all stupidity in the world, his must be the greatest, who after robbing a house runs to the thief-taker's for protection; and yet, how are you more wise? You are all seeking comfort from one that has already betrayed you, applying to a more malicious being than any thief-taker of them all; for they only decoy and then hang you; but he decoys and hangs, and, what is worst of all, will not let you loose after the hangman has done."

When I had concluded, I received the compliments of my audience, some of whom came and shook me by the hand, swearing that I was a very honest fellow, and that they desired my further acquaintance. I therefore promised to repeat my lecture the next day, and actually conceived some hopes of making a reformation here; for it had ever been my opinion, that no man was past the hour of amendment, every heart lying open to the shafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus satisfied my mind, I went back to my apartment, where my wife prepared a frugal meal; while Mr. Jenkinson begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleasure, as he was kind enough to express it, of my conversation. He had not yet seen my family, for as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow passage already described, by this means they avoided the common prison. Jenkinson, at the first interview, therefore, seemed not a little struck with the beauty of my youngest daughter, which her pensive air contributed to heighten; and my little ones did not pass unnoticed.

"Alas, Doctor," cried he, "these children are too handsome and too good for such a place as this!"

"Why, Mr. Jenkinson," replied I, "thank Heaven, my children

are pretty tolerable in morals; and if they be good, it matters little for the rest."

"I fancy, Sir," returned my fellow-prisoner, "that it must give you great comfort to have all this little family about you."

"A comfort, Mr. Jenkinson," replied I, "yes, it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be without them for all the world; for they can make a dungeon seem a palace. There is but one way in this life of wounding my happiness, and that is by injuring them."

"I am afraid then, Sir," cried he, "that I am in some measure culpable; for I think I see here" (looking at my son Moses) "one that I have injured, and by whom I wish to be forgiven."

My son immediately recollected his voice and features, though he had before seen him in disguise, and taking him by the hand, with a smile forgave him. "Yet," continued he, "I can't help wondering at what you could see in my face, to think me a proper mark for deception."

"My dear Sir," returned the other, "it was not your face, but your white stockings and the black riband in your hair, that allured me: but, no disparagement to your parts, I have deceived wiser men than you in my time; and yet, with all my tricks, the blockheads have been too many for me at last."

"I suppose," cried my son, "that the narrative of such a life as yours must be extremely instructive and amusing."

"Not much of either," returned Mr. Jenkinson: "those relations which describe the tricks and vices only of mankind, by increasing our suspicion in life, retard our success. The traveller that distrusts every person he meets, and turns back upon the appearance of every man that looks like a robber, seldom arrives in time at his journey's end."

"Indeed, I think, from my own experience, that the knowing
● one is the silliest fellow under the sun. I was thought cunning from my very childhood; when but seven years old, the ladies would say that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen I knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved the ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honest, yet every one thought me so cunning, that not one would trust me; thus I was at last obliged to turn sharper in my own defence, and have lived ever since, my head throbbing with schemes to deceive, and my heart palpitating with

fears of detection. I used often to laugh at your honest simple neighbour Flamborough, and one way or another generally cheated him once a year. Yet still the honest man went forward without suspicion, and grew rich; while I still continued tricky and cunning, and was poor, without the consolation of being honest. However," continued he, "let me know your case, and what has brought you here; perhaps, though I have not skill to avoid a jail myself, I may extricate my friends."

In compliance with his curiosity, I informed him of the whole train of accidents and follies that had plunged me into my present troubles, and my utter inability to get free.

After hearing my story, and pausing some minutes, he slapped his forehead, as if he had hit upon something material, and took his leave, saying he would try what could be done.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The same subject continued.

THE next morning, I communicated to my wife and children the scheme I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alleging the impossibility and impropriety of it; adding, that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

"Excuse me," returned I; "these people, however fallen, are still men; and that is a very good title to my affections. Good counsel rejected returns to enrich the giver's bosom; and though the instruction I communicate may not mend them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these wretches, my children, were princes, there would be thousands ready to offer their ministry; but, in my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that seated upon a throne. Yes, my treasures, if I can mend them, I will; perhaps they will not all despise me. Perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulf, and that will be

a great gain; for is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human soul?"

Thus saying, I left them, and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my arrival; and each prepared with some jail trick to play upon the doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon; a second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book; a third would cry "Amen" in such an affected tone as gave the rest great delight; a fourth had slyly picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for, observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dexterously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this mischievous group of little beings could do; but went on, perfectly sensible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the first or second time, while what was serious would be permanent. My design succeeded, and, in less than six days, some were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perseverance and address, at thus giving sensibility to wretches divested of every moral feeling; and I now began to think of doing them temporal services also, by rendering their situation somewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and excess, tumultuous riot and bitter repining; their only employment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco-stoppers. From this last mode of idle industry, I took the hint of setting such as chose to work at cutting pegs for tobacco-nists and shoemakers, the proper wood being bought by a general subscription, and when manufactured, sold by my appointment; so that each earned something every day; a trifle, indeed, but sufficient to maintain him.

I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus, in less than a fortnight, I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.

And it were highly to be wished, that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity; that it would seem convinced that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. Then, instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which enclose wretches for the commission of one crime; and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands; we should see, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance if guilty, or new motives to virtue if innocent. And this, but not the increasing punishments, is the way to mend a state: nor can I avoid even questioning the validity of the right which social combinations have assumed, of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature. In cases of murder, their right is obvious, as it is the duty of us all, from the law of self-defence, to cut off that man who has shown a disregard for the life of another. Against such, all nature rises in arms; but it is not so against him who steals my property. Natural law gives me no right to take away his life, as by that the horse he steals is as much his property as mine. If then I have any right, it must be from a compact made between us, that he who deprives the other of his horse shall die. But this is a false compact; because no man has a right to barter his life, any more than to take it away, as it is not his own. And besides, the compact is inadequate, and would be set aside even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a very trifling inconvenience, since it is far better that two men should live, than that one man should ride. But a compact that is false between two men, is equally so between a hundred, or a hundred thousand; for as ten millions of circles can never make a square, so the united voice of myriads cannot lend the smallest foundation to falsehood. It is thus that reason speaks, and untutored nature says the same thing. Savages that are directed by natural law alone are very tender of the lives of each other; they seldom shed blood but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon ancestors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace; and in all commencing governments that have the print of nature still strong upon them, scarcely any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community that penal

laws, which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, seems to acquire the moroseness of age; and as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increased, as if the more enormous our wealth, the more extensive our fears, all our possessions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to scare every invader.

I cannot tell whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiousness of our people, that this country should show more convicts in a year than half the dominions of Europe united. Perhaps it is owing to both, for they mutually produce each other. When by indiscriminate penal laws, a nation beholds the same punishment affixed to dissimilar degrees of guilt, from perceiving no distinction in the penalty, the people are led to lose all sense of distinction in the crime, and this distinction is the bulwark of all morality: thus the multitude of laws produces new vices, and new vices call for fresh restraints.

It were to be wished, then, that power, instead of contriving new laws to punish vice, instead of drawing hard the cords of society till a convulsion come to burst them, instead of cutting away wretches as useless before we have tried their utility, instead of converting correction into vengeance, it were to be wished that we tried the restrictive arts of government, and made law the protector, but not the tyrant, of the people. We should then find that creatures, whose souls are held as dross, only wanted the hand of a refiner; we should then find that creatures, now stuck up for long tortures, lest luxury should feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, serve to sinew the state in times of danger; that, as their faces are like ours, their hearts are so too; that few minds are so base as that perseverance cannot amend; that a man may see his last crime without dying for it; and that very little blood will serve to cement our security.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Happiness and misery rather the result of prudence than of virtue in this life.

I HAD now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not since my arrival been visited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to see her. Having communicated my wishes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment, leaning on her sister's arm. The change which I saw in her countenance struck me. The numberless graces that once resided there were now fled, and the hand of death seemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were sunk, her forehead was tense, and a fatal paleness sat upon her cheek.

"I am glad to see thee, my dear," cried I; "but why this dejection, Livy? I hope, my love, you have too great a regard for me, to permit disappointment thus to undermine a life, which I prize as my own. Be cheerful, child! and we may yet see happier days."

"You have ever, Sir," replied she, "been kind to me, and it adds to my pain, that I shall never have an opportunity of sharing that happiness you promise. Happiness, I fear, is no longer reserved for me here; and I long to be rid of a place where I have only found distress. Indeed, Sir, I wish you would make a proper submission to Mr. Thornhill; it may, in some measure, induce him to pity you, and it will give me relief in dying."

"Never, child," replied I, "never will I be brought to acknowledge my daughter a prostitute; for though the world may look upon your offence with scorn, let it be mine to regard it as a mark of credulity, not of guilt. My dear, I am no way miserable in this place, however dismal it may seem; and be assured, that while you continue to bless me by living, he shall never have my consent to make you more wretched by marrying another."

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow-prisoner, who was by at this interview, sensibly enough expostulated upon my obstinacy, in refusing a submission which promised to give me freedom. He observed, that the rest of my family was not to be sacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and she the only one who had offended me. "Beside," added he, "I don't know if it be just thus to obstruct the union of man and wife, which you do at present, by refusing to consent to a match which you cannot hinder, but may render unhappy."

"Sir," replied I, "you are unacquainted with the man that oppresses us. I am very sensible that no submission I can make could procure me liberty even for an hour. I am told that even in this very room a debtor of his, no later than last year, died for want. But though my submission and approbation could transfer me from hence to the most beautiful apartment he is possessed of, yet I would grant neither; as something whispers me, that it would be giving a sanction to adultery. While my daughter lives, no other marriage of his shall ever be legal in my eye. Were she removed, indeed, I should be the basest of men, from any resentment of my own, to attempt putting asunder those who wish for a union. No, villain as he is, I should then wish him married, to prevent the consequences of his future debaucheries. But now, should I not be the most cruel of all fathers, to sign an instrument which must send my child to the grave, merely to avoid a prison myself? and thus, to escape one pang, break my child's heart with a thousand?"

He acquiesced in the justice of this answer, but could not avoid observing, that he feared my daughter's life was already too much wasted to keep me long a prisoner. "However," continued he, "though you refuse to submit to the nephew, I hope you have no objections to laying your case before the uncle, who has the first character in the kingdom for every thing that is just and good. I would advise you to send him a letter by the post, intimating all his nephew's ill usage; and my life for it, that in three days you shall have an answer." I thanked him for the hint, and instantly set about complying; but I wanted paper, and unluckily all our money had been laid out that morning in provisions; however, he supplied me.

For the three ensuing days, I was in a state of anxiety to know what reception my letter might meet with; but in the

mean time, was frequently solicited by my wife to submit to any conditions rather than remain here, and, every hour received repeated accounts of the decline of my daughter's health. The third day and the fourth arrived, but I received no answer to my letter : the complaints of a stranger against a favourite nephew, were no way likely to succeed : so that these hopes soon vanished like all my former. My mind, however, till supported itself, though confinement and bad air began to make a visible alteration in my health, and my arm that had suffered in the fire grew worse. My children, however, sat by me, and while I was stretched on my straw, read to me by turns, or listened and wept at my instructions. But my daughter's health declining faster than mine, every message from her contributed to increase my apprehensions and pain. The fifth morning after I had written the letter which was sent to Sir William Thornhill, I was alarmed with an account that she was speechless. Now it was that confinement was truly painful to me ; my soul was bursting from its prison to be near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to strengthen her, to receive her last wishes, and teach her soul the way to heaven ! Another account came : she was expiring, and yet I was debarred the small comfort of weeping by her. My fellow-prisoner, some time after, came with the last account. He bade me be patient ; she was dead !—The next morning he returned, and found me with my two little ones, now my only companions, who were using all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They entreated to read to me, and bade me not cry, for I was now too old to weep. “ And is not my sister an angel now, papa ? ” cried the eldest, “ and why then are you sorry for her ? I wish I were an angel out of this frightful place, if my papa were with me.”—“ Yes,” added my youngest darling, “ Heaven, where my sister is, is a finer place than this, and there are none but good people there and the people here are very bad.”

Mr. Jenkinson interrupted their harmless prattle, by observing, that now my daughter was no more, I should seriously think of the rest of my family, and attempt to save my own life, which was every day declining, for want of necessaries and wholesome air. He added, that it was now incumbent on me to sacrifice any pride or resentment of my own, to the welfare of those who

depended on me for support ; and that I was now, both by reason and justice, obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

"Heaven be praised," replied I, "there is no pride left me now ; I should detest my own heart, if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to present him an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal. No, Sir, I have no resentment now ; and though he has taken from me what I held dearer than all his treasures, though he has wrung my heart, for I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow-prisoner, yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. I am now willing to approve his marriage ; and if this submission can do him any pleasure, let him know, that if I have done him any injury, I am sorry for it." Mr. Jenkinson took pen and ink, and wrote down my submission nearly as I have expressed it, to which I signed my name. My son was employed to carry the letter to Mr. Thornhill, who was then at his seat in the country. He went, and in about six hours returned with a verbal answer. He had some difficulty, he said, to get a sight of his landlord, as the servants were insolent and suspicious ; but he accidentally saw him as he was going out upon business, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in about three days. He continued to inform us, that he stepped up in the humblest manner, and delivered the letter, which when Mr. Thornhill had read, he said that all submission was now too late and unnecessary ; that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deserved ; and as for the rest, that all future applications should be directed to his attorney, not to him. He observed, however, that as he had a very good opinion of the discretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the most agreeable intercessors.

"Well, Sir," said I to my fellow-prisoner, "you now discover the temper of the man who oppresses me. He can at once be facetious and cruel ; but let him use me as he will, I shall soon be free, in spite of all his bolts to restrain me. I am now drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as I approach it ; this expectation cheers my afflictions, and though I leave an helpless family of orphans behind me, yet they will not be utterly forsaken ; some friend, perhaps, will be found to assist them for the

sake of their poor father, and some may charitably relieve them for the sake of their heavenly Father."

Just as I spoke, my wife, whom I had not seen that day before, appeared with looks of terror, and making efforts, but unable to speak. "Why, my love," cried I, "why will you thus increase my afflictions by your own? what though no submission can turn our severe master, though he has doomed me to die in this place of wretchedness, and though we have lost a darling child, yet still you will find comfort in your other children when I shall be no more."—"We have indeed lost," returned she, "a darling child. My Sophia, my dearest, is gone, snatched from us, carried off by ruffians!"

"How, Madam," cried my fellow-prisoner, "Miss Sophia carried off by villains! sure it cannot be?"

She could only answer with a fixed look and flood of tears. But one of the prisoners' wives, who was present, and came in with her, gave us a more distinct account: she informed us, that as my wife, my daughter, and herself, were taking a walk together on the great road a little way out of the village, a post-chaise and pair drove up to them, and instantly stopped; upon which a well-dressed man, but not Mr. Thornhill, stepping out, clasped my daughter round the waist, and, forcing her in, bid the postillion drive on, so that they were out of sight in a moment.

"Now," cried I, "the sum of my miseries is made up, nor is it in the power of any thing on earth to give me another pang. What? not one left? not to leave me one? the monster! The child that was next my heart! she had the beauty of an angel, and almost the wisdom of an angel. But support that woman, nor let her fall. Not to leave me one!"—"Alas! my husband," said my wife, "you seem to want comfort even more than I. Our distresses are great; but I could bear this and more, if I saw you but easy. They may take away my children, and all the world, if they leave me but you."

My son, who was present, endeavoured to moderate our grief; he bade us take comfort, for he hoped that we might still have reason to be thankful.—"My child," cried I, "look round the world, and see if there be any happiness left me now. Is not every ray of comfort shut out, while all our bright prospects only lie beyond the grave?"—"My dear father," returned he, "I

hope there is still something that will give you an interval of satisfaction; for I have a letter from my brother George.”—“What of him, child?” interrupted I; “does he know our misery? I hope my boy is exempt from any part of what his wretched family suffers?”—“Yes, Sir,” returned he, “he is perfectly gay, cheerful, and happy. His letter brings nothing but good news: he is the favourite of his colonel, who promises to procure him the very next lieutenantancy that becomes vacant.”

“And are you sure of all this?” cried my wife; “are you sure that nothing ill has befallen my boy?”—“Nothing, indeed, Madam,” returned my son; “you shall see the letter, which will give you the highest pleasure; and if any thing can procure you comfort, I am sure that will.”—“But are you sure,” still repeated she, “that the letter is from himself, and that he is really so happy?”—“Yes, Madam,” replied he, “it is certainly his; and he will one day be the credit and the support of our family!”—“Then I thank Providence,” cried she, “that my last letter to him has miscarried. Yes, my dear,” continued she, turning to me, “I will now confess, that though the hand of Heaven is sore upon us in other instances, it has been favourable here. By the last letter I wrote my son, which was in the bitterness of anger, I desired him, upon his mother’s blessing, and if he had the heart of a man, to see justice done his father and sister, and avenge our cause. But, thanks be to him that directs all things, it has miscarried, and I am at rest.”—“Woman,” cried I, “thou hast done very ill, and at another time my reproaches might have been more severe. Oh! what a tremendous gulf hast thou escaped, that would have buried both thee and him in endless ruin. Providence, indeed, has here been kinder to us than we to ourselves; it has reserved that son to be the father and protector of my children when I shall be away. How unjustly did I complain of being stripped of every comfort, when still I hear that he is happy and insensible of our afflictions; still kept in reserve to support his widowed mother, and to protect his brothers and sisters. But what sisters has he left? he has no sisters now! they are all gone, robbed from me, and I am undone.”—“Father,” interrupted my son, “I beg you will give me leave to read this letter, I know it will please you.” Upon which, with my permission, he read as follows:

"HONOURED SIR,

"I have called off my imagination a few moments from the pleasures that surround me, to fix it upon objects that are still more pleasing, the dear little fireside at home. My fancy draws that harmless group as listening to every line of this with great composure. I view those faces with delight which never felt the deforming hand of ambition or distress! But whatever your happiness may be at home, I am sure it will be some addition to it, to hear that I am perfectly pleased with my situation, and every way happy here.

"Our regiment is countermanded, and is not to leave the kingdom. The colonel, who professes himself my friend, takes me with him to all companies where he is acquainted; and after my first visit, I generally find myself received with increased respect upon repeating it. I danced last night with lady G—; and could I forget you know whom, I might perhaps be successful. But it is my fate still to remember others, while I am myself forgotten by most of my absent friends; and in this number, I fear, Sir, that I must consider you; for I have long expected the pleasure of a letter from home to no purpose. Olivia, and Sophia, too, promised to write, but seem to have forgotten me. Tell them they are two arrant little baggages, and that I am this moment in a most violent passion with them; yet still, I know not how, though I want to bluster a little, my heart is respondent only to softer emotions. Then tell them, Sir, that, after all, I love them affectionately; and be assured of my ever remaining

"Your dutiful son."

"In all our miseries," cried I, "what thanks have we not to return, that one at least of our family is exempt from what we suffer. Heaven be his guard, and keep my boy thus happy to be the supporter of his widowed mother, and the father of these two babes, which is all the patrimony I can now bequeath him. May he keep their innocence from the temptations of want, and be their conductor in the paths of honour!"

I had scarce said these words, when a noise, like that of a tumult, seemed to proceed from the prison below; it died away soon after, and a clanking of fetters was heard along the passage that led to my apartment. The keeper of the prison entered,

holding a man all bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heaviest irons. I looked with compassion on the wretch as he approached me, but with horror when I found it was my own son.—"My George! My George! and do I behold thee thus? Wounded! fettered! is this thy happiness? Is this the manner you return to me? O that this sight would break my heart at once and let me die!"

"Where, Sir, is your fortitude?" returned my son, with an intrepid voice. "I must suffer; my life is forfeited, and let them take it!"

I tried to restrain my passions for a few minutes in silence, but I thought I should have died with the effort.—"O my boy, my heart weeps to behold thee thus, and I cannot, cannot help it. In the moment that I thought thee blessed, and prayed for thy safety, to behold thee thus again! chained, wounded! And yet the death of the youthful is happy. But I am old, a very old man, and have lived to see this day—to see my children all untimely falling about me, while I continue a wretched survivor in the midst of ruin! May all the curses that ever sunk a soul fall heavy upon the murderer of my children! May he live, like me, to see—"

"Hold, Sir," replied my son, "or I shall blush for thee. How, Sir, forgetful of your age, your holy calling, thus to arrogate the justice of heaven, and fling those curses upward, that must soon descend to crush thy own gray head with destruction! No, Sir, let it be your care now to fit me for that vile death I must shortly suffer, to arm me with hope and resolution, to give me courage to drink of that bitterness which must shortly be my portion."

"My child, you must not die; I am sure no offence of thine can deserve so vile a punishment. My George could never be guilty of any crime to make his ancestors ashamed of him."

"Mine, Sir," returned my son, "is, I fear, an unpardonable one. When I received my mother's letter from home, I immediately came down, determined to punish the betrayer of our honour, and sent him an order to meet me, which he answered, not in person, but by dispatching four of his domestics to seize me. I wounded one who first assaulted me, and I fear desperately; but the rest made me their prisoner. The coward is determined to put the law in execution against me. The proofs

are undeniable ; I have sent a challenge, and as I am the first transgressor upon the statute, I see no hopes of pardon. But you have often charmed me with your lessons of fortitude ; let me now, Sir, find them in your example."

"And, my son," replied I, "you shall find them. I am now raised above this world, and all the pleasures it can produce. From this moment I break from my heart all the ties that held it down to earth, and will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes, my son, I will point out the way ; and my soul shall guide yours in the ascent, for we will take our flight together. I now see and am convinced you can expect no pardon here, and I can only exhort you to seek it at that greatest tribunal where we both shall shortly answer. But let us not be niggardly in our exhortations, but let all our fellow-prisoners have a share : good jailer, let them be permitted to stand here, while I attempt to improve them." Thus saying, I made an effort to rise from my straw, but wanted strength, and was able only to retine against the wall. The prisoners assembled according to my directions, for they loved to hear my counsel ; my son and his mother supported me on either side ; I looked and saw that none were wanting, and then addressed them with the following exhortation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The equal dealings of Providence demonstrated with regard to the happy and the miserable here below. That from the nature of pleasure and pain, the wretched must be repaid the balance of their sufferings in the life hereafter.

"My friends, my children, and fellow-sufferers, when I reflect on the distribution of good and evil here below, I find that much has been given man to enjoy, yet still more to suffer. Though we should examine the whole world, we shall not find one man so happy as to have nothing left to wish for, but we daily see thousands who by suicide show us they have nothing left to hope.

In this life, then, it appears that we cannot be entirely blessed ; but yet we may be completely miserable.

“Why man should thus feel pain, why our wretchedness should be requisite in the formation of universal felicity ; why, when all other symptoms are made perfect by the perfection of their subordinate parts, the great system should require for its perfection parts that are not only subordinate to others, but imperfect in themselves ; these are questions that never can be explained, and might be useless if known. On this subject Providence has thought fit to elude our curiosity, satisfied with granting us motives to consolation.”

“In this situation, man has called in the friendly assistance of philosophy ; and Heaven, seeing the incapacity of that to console him, has given him the aid of religion. The consolations of philosophy are very amusing, but often fallacious. It tells us that life is filled with comforts, if we will but enjoy them ; and on the other hand, that though we unavoidably have miseries here, life is short, and they will soon be over. Thus do these consolations destroy each other ; for, if life be a place of comfort, its shortness must be misery ; and if it be long, our griefs are protracted. Thus philosophy is weak : but religion comforts in a higher strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing it for another abode. When the good man leaves the body, and is all a glorious mind, he will find he has been making himself a heaven of happiness here, while the wretch that has been maimed and contaminated by his vices, shrinks from his body with terror, and finds that he has anticipated the vengeance of Heaven. To religion, then, we must hold, in every circumstance of life, for our truest comfort ; for if already we are happy, it is a pleasure to think that we can make that happiness unending ; and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think that there is a place of rest. Thus, to the fortunate, religion holds out a continuance of bliss ; to the wretched, a change from pain.

“But though religion is very kind to all men, it has promised peculiar rewards to the unhappy ; the sick, the naked, the houseless, the heavy-laden, and the prisoner, have ever most frequent promises in our sacred law. The author of our religion every where professes himself the wretch’s friend ; and, unlike the false ones of this world, bestows all his caresses upon the for-

lorn. The unthinking have censured this as partiality, as a preference without merit to deserve it; but they never reflect that it is not in the power even of Heaven itself to make the offer of unceasing felicity as great a gift to the happy as to the miserable. To the first, eternity is but a single blessing, since at most it but increases what they already possess. To the latter, it is a double advantage; for it diminishes their pain here, and rewards them with heavenly bliss hereafter.

“But Providence is, in another respect, kinder to the poor than to the rich; for, as it thus makes the life after death more desirable, so it smoothes the passage there. The wretched have had a long familiarity with every face of terror. The man of sorrows lays himself quietly down, with no possessions to regret, and but few ties to stop his departure: he feels only nature’s pang in the final separation, and this in no way greater than he has often fainted under before; for after a certain degree of pain, every new breach that death opens in the constitution, nature kindly covers with insensibility.

“Thus Providence has given the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life: greater felicity in dying, and in Heaven all that superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyment. And this superiority, my friends, is no small advantage, and seems to be one of the pleasures of the poor man in the parable; for though he was already in heaven, and felt all the raptures it could give, yet it was mentioned as an addition to his happiness, that he once had been wretched, and now was comforted; that he had known what it was to be miserable, and now felt what it was to be happy.

“Thus, my friends, you see religion does what philosophy could never do: it shows the equal dealings of Heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the same standard. It gives to both rich and poor the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to aspire after it; but if the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleasure here, the poor have the endless satisfaction of knowing what it was once to be miserable, when crowned with endless felicity hereafter: and even though this should be called a small advantage, yet, being an eternal one, it must make up by duration what the temporal happiness of the great may have exceeded by intensity.

"These are, therefore, the consolations which the wretched have peculiar to themselves; and in which they are above the rest of mankind; in other respects, they are below them. They who would know the miseries of the poor, must see life and endure it. To declaim on the temporal advantages they enjoy, is only repeating what none either believe or practise. The men who have the necessaries of living are not poor, and they who want them must be miserable. Yes, my friends, we must be miserable. No vain efforts of a refined imagination can soothe the wants of nature, can give elastic sweetness to the dank vapour of a dungeon, or ease to the throbbings of a broken heart. Let the philosopher from his couch of softness tell us that we can resist all these. Alas! the effort by which we resist them is still the greatest pain! Death is slight, and any man may sustain it; but torments are dreadful, and these no man can endure.

"To us, then, my friends, the promises of happiness in Heaven should be peculiarly dear; for if our reward be in this life alone, we are then indeed of all men the most miserable. When I look round these gloomy walls, made to terrify as well as to confine us; this light, that only serves to show the horrors of the place; those shackles that tyranny has imposed or crime made necessary; when I survey these emaciated looks, and hear those groans! O! my friends, what a glorious exchange would Heaven be for these! To fly through regions unconfined as air, to bask in the sunshine of eternal bliss, to warol over endless hymns of praise, to have no master to threaten or insult us, but the form of Goodness himself for ever in our eyes; when I think of these things, death becomes the messenger of very glad tidings: when I think of these things, his sharpest arrow becomes the staff of my support; when I think of these things, what is there in life worth having? when I think of these things, what is there that should not be spurned away? Kings in their palaces should groan for such advantages; but we, humbled as we are, should yearn for them.

"And shall these things be ours? Ours they will certainly be, if we but try for them; and, what is a comfort, we are shut out from many temptations that would retard our pursuit. Only let us try for them, and they will certainly be ours; and, what is still a comfort, shortly too: for if we look back on a past life,

it appears but a very short span ; and whatever we may think of the rest of life, it will yet be found of less duration : as we grow older, the days seem to grow shorter, and our intimacy with time ever lessens the perception of his stay. Then let us take comfort now, for we shall soon be at our journey's end ; we shall soon lay down the heavy burden laid by Heaven upon us ; and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while knocks the weary traveller with the view, and, like the horizon, still flies before him ; yet the time will certainly and shortly come, when we shall cease from our toil ; when the luxuriant great ones of the world shall no more tread us to the earth ; when we shall think with pleasure of our sufferings below ; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship ; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still ; to crown all, unending."

CHAPTER XXX.

Happier prospects begin to appear.—Let us be inflexible, and fortune will at last change in our favour.

WHEN I had thus finished, and my audience was retired, the jailer, who was one of the most humane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased, as what he did was but his duty, observing that he must be obliged to remove my son into a stronger cell, but that he should be permitted to visit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency, and grasping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again, therefore, laid me down, and one of my little ones sat by my bedside reading, when Mr. Jenkinson entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter ; for that she was seen by a person about two hours before in a strange gentleman's company ; and that they had stopped at a neighbouring village for refreshment, and seemed as if returning to town. He

had scarce delivered this news, when the jailer came, with looks of haste and pleasure, to inform me that my daughter was found. Moses came running in a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr. Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news, my dearest girl entered, and with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence also showed her pleasure.—“Here, papa,” cried the charming girl, “here is the brave man to whom I owe my delivery; to this gentleman's intrepidity I am indebted for my happiness and safety.”—A kiss from Mr. Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than hers, interrupted what she was going to add.

“Ah, Mr. Burchell,” cried I, “this is but a wretched habitation you now find us in, and we are now very different from what you last saw us. You were ever our friend. We have long discovered our errors with regard to you, and repent of our ingratitude. After the vile usage you then received at my hands, I am almost ashamed to behold your face; yet I hope you'll forgive me, as I was deceived by a base ungenerous wretch, who, under the mask of friendship, has undone me.”

“It is impossible,” replied Mr. Burchell, “that I should forgive you, as you never deserved my resentment. I partly saw your delusion then, and as it was out of my power to restrain, I could only pity it!”

“It was ever my conjecture,” cried I, “that your mind was noble; but now I find it so. But tell me, my dear child, how hast thou been relieved, or who the ruffians were who carried thee away?”

“Indeed, Sir,” replied she, “as to the villain who carried me off, I am yet ignorant. For as my mamma and I were walking out, he came behind us, and almost before I could call for help forced me into the post-chaise, and in an instant the horses drove away. I met several on the road, to whom I cried out for assistance; but they disregarded my entreaties. In the mean time, the ruffian himself used every art to hinder me from crying out. He flattered and threatened me by turns; and swore that if I continued but silent he intended no harm. In the mean time, I had broken the canvass that he had drawn up, and whom should I perceive at some distance but your old friend

Mr. Burchell, walking along with his usual swiftness, with the great stick for which we used so much to ridicule him. As soon as we came within hearing, I called out to him by name, and entreated his help. I repeated my exclamations several times, upon which, with a very loud voice, he bid the postillion stop; but the boy took no notice, but drove on with still greater speed. I now thought he could never overtake us, when in less than a minute I saw Mr. Burchell come running up by the side of the horses, and with one blow knock the postillion to the ground. The horses, when he was fallen, soon stopped of themselves; and the ruffian, stepping out, with oaths and menaces, drew his sword, and ordered him at his peril to retire; but Mr. Burchell running up, shivered his sword to pieces, and then pursued him for near a quarter of a mile; but he made his escape. I was at this time come out myself, willing to assist my deliverer; but he soon returned to me in triumph. The postillion, who was recovered, was going to make his escape too; but Mr. Burchell ordered him, at his peril, to mount again, and drive back to town. Finding it impossible to resist, he reluctantly complied, though the wound he had received seemed to me at least to be dangerous. He continued to complain of the pain as we drove along, so that he at last excited Mr. Burchell's compassion, who, at my request, exchanged him for another at an inn where we called on our return."

"Welcome, then," cried I, "my child; and thou, her gallant deliverer, a thousand welcomes. Though our cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts are ready to receive you. And now, Mr. Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think her a recompense, she is yours. If you can stoop to an alliance with a family so poor as mine, take her: obtain her consent, as I know you have her heart, and you have mine. And let me tell you, Sir, that I give you no small treasure; she has been celebrated for her beauty, it is true; but that is not my meaning; I give you up a treasure in her mind."

"But I suppose, Sir," cried Mr. Burchell, "that you are surprised of my circumstances, and of my incapacity to support her as she deserves?"

"If your present objection," replied I, "be meant as an evasion of my offer, I desist: but I know no man so worthy to deserve her as you; and if I could give her thousands, and

thousands sought her from me, yet my honest brave Burchell should be my dearest choice."

To all this his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal; and, without the least reply to my offer, he demanded if we could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn? to which, being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He bespoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me; adding, with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once; and though in a prison, asserted he was never better disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner; a table was lent us by the jailer, who seemed remarkably assiduous; the wine was disposed in order, and two very well dressed dishes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother's melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling to damp her cheerfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear cheerful, the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts to dissemble; so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth, by relating his misfortunes, and wishing that he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced, I requested also that Mr. Jenkinson, a fellow-prisoner, might be admitted; and the jailer granted my request with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons was no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr. Burchell, in the mean time, asked me if my son's name was George? to which replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy entered the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr. Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence. "Come on," cried I, "my son, though we are fallen very low, yet Providence has been pleased to grant us some small relaxation from pain. Thy sister is restored to us, and there is her deliverer: to that brave man it is that I am indebted for yet having a daughter: give him, my boy, the hand of friendship, he deserves our warmest gratitude."

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at a respectful distance.—"My dear brother,"

cried his sister, "why don't you thank my good deliverer? the brave should ever love each other."

He still continued his silence and astonishment, till our guest at last perceived himself to be known, and assuming all his native dignity, desired my son to come forward. Never before had I seen any thing so truly majestic as the air he assumed upon this occasion. "The greatest object in the universe," says a certain philosopher, "is a good man struggling with adversity;" yet there is still a greater, which is, the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superior air, "I again find," said he, "unthinking boy, that the same crime"—But here he was interrupted by one of the jailer's servants, who came to inform us that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon.—"Bid the fellow wait," cried our guest, "till I have leisure to receive him;" and then turning to my son, "I again find, Sir," proceeded he, "that you are guilty of the same offence for which you once had my reproof, and for which the law is now preparing its justest punishments. You imagine, perhaps, that contempt for your own life gives you a right to take that of another; but where, Sir, is the difference between a duellist who hazards a life of no value, and the murderer who acts with greater security? Is it any diminution of the gamester's fraud, when he alleges that he has staked a counter?"

"Alas, Sir," cried I, "whoever you are, pity the poor misguided creature; for what he has done was in obedience to a deluded mother, who, in the bitterness of her resentment, required him upon her blessing to avenge her quarrel. Here, Sir, is the letter; which will serve to convince you of her imprudence, and diminish his guilt."

He took the letter, and then hastily read it over. "This," says he, "though not a perfect excuse, is such a palliation of his fault, as induces me to forgive him.—And now, Sir," continued he, kindly taking my son by the hand, "I see you are surprised at finding me here; but I have often visited prisons upon occasions less interesting. I am now come to see justice done a worthy man, for whom I have the most sincere esteem. I have long been a disguised spectator of thy father's benevolence. I

have, at his little dwelling, enjoyed respect uncontaminated by flattery, and have received that happiness that courts could not give, from the amusing simplicity around his fireside. My nephew has been apprised of my intentions of coming here, and I find is arrived. It would be wronging him and you, to condemn him without examination: if there be injury, there shall be redress; and this I may say without boasting, that none have ever taxed the justice of Sir William Thornhill."

We now found that the personage whom we had so long entertained as a harmless amusing companion, was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill; to whose virtues and singularities scarce any were strangers. The poor Mr. Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom senates listened with applause, and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her former familiarity, seemed to shrink with apprehension; but Sophia, who a few moments before thought him her own, now perceiving the immense distance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

"Ah, Sir," cried my wife, with a piteous aspect, "how is it possible that I can ever have your forgiveness? The slights you received from me, the last time I had the honour of seeing you at our house, and the jokes which I audaciously threw out—these, Sir, I fear, can never be forgiven."

"My dear good lady," returned he with a smile, "if you had your joke, I had my answer; I'll leave it to all the company if mine were not as good as yours. To say the truth, I know nobody whom I am disposed to be angry with at present, but the fellow who so frightened my little girl here. I had not even time to examine the rascal's person, so as to describe him in an advertisement. •Can you tell me, Sophia, my dear, whether you should know him again?"

"Indeed, Sir," replied she, "I can't be positive; yet now I recollect, he had a large mark over one of his eyebrows."—"I ask pardon, madam," interrupted Jenkinson, who was by, "but be so good as to inform me if the fellow wore his own red hair?"—"Yes, I think so," cried Sophia.—"And did your honour," continued he, turning to Sir William, "observe the length of his legs?"—"I can't be sure of their length," cried the Ba-

ronet, "but I am convinced of their swiftness : for he outran me ; which is what I thought few men in the kingdom could have done."—"Please your honour," cried Jenkinson, "I know the man. It is certainly the same ; the best runner in England ; he has beaten Pinwire of Newcastle. Timothy Baxter is his name ; I know him perfectly, and the very place of his retreat this moment. If your honour will bid Mr. Jailer let two of his men go with me, I'll engage to produce him to you in an hour at furthest." Upon this the jailer was called, who instantly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him ? "Yes, please your honour," replied the jailer, "I know Sir William Thornhill well ; and every body that knows any thing of him will desire to know more of him."—"Well, then," said the Baronet, "my request is that you will permit this man and two of your servants to go upon a message by my authority ; and as I am in the commission of the peace, I undertake to secure you."—"Your promise is sufficient," replied the other, "and you may at a minute's warning send them over England, whenever your honour thinks fit."

In pursuance of the jailer's compliance, Jenkinson was dispatched in search of Timothy Baxter, while we were amused with the assiduity of our youngest boy Bill, who had just come in, and climbed up to Sir William's neck in order to kiss him. His mother was immediately going to chastise his familiarity, but the worthy man prevented her ; and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee, "What, Bill ! you chubby rogue," cried he, "do you remember your old friend Burchell ? and Dick too, my honest veteran, are you here ? you shall find I have not forgot you." So saying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows ate very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very scanty breakfast.

We now sat down to dinner, which was almost cold ; but previously, my arm still continuing painful, Sir William wrote a prescription ; for he had made the study of physic his amusement, and was more than moderately skilled in the profession : this being sent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my arm was dressed, and I found almost instantaneous relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the jailer himself, who was willing to do our guest all the honour in his power. But before we had well dined, another message was brought from his nephew,

desiring permission to appear, in order to vindicate his innocence and honour, with which request the Baronet complied, and desired Mr. Thornhill to be introduced.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Former benevolence now repaid with unexpected interest.

Mr. Thornhill made his entrance with a smile, which he seldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulsed with an air of disdain. "No fawning, Sir, at present," cried the Baronet, with a look of severity; "the only way to my heart is by the road of honour; but here I only see complicated instances of falsehood, cowardice, and oppression. How is it, Sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you professed a friendship, is used thus hardly? his daughter vilely seduced, as a recompense for his hospitality, and he himself thrown into a prison, perhaps but for resenting the insult? His son, too, whom you feared to face as a man—"

"Is it possible, Sir," interrupted his nephew, "that my uncle could object that as a crime, which his repeated instructions alone have persuaded me to avoid?"

"Your rebuke," cried Sir William, "is just; you have acted, in this instance, prudently and well, though not quite as your father would have done. My brother, indeed, was the soul of honour; but thou—yes, you have acted in this instance perfectly right, and it has my warmest approbation."

"And I hope," said his nephew, "that the rest of my conduct will not be found to deserve censure. I appeared, Sir, with this gentleman's daughter at some places of public amusement: thus, what was levity, scandal called by a harsher name, and it was reported that I had debauched her. I waited on her father in person, willing to clear the thing to his satisfaction, and he received me only with insult and abuse. As for the rest, with regard to his being here, my attorney and steward can best inform

you, as I commit the management of business entirely to them. If he has contracted debts, and is unwilling or even unable to pay them, it is their business to proceed in this manner; and I see no hardship or injustice in pursuing the most legal means of redress."

"If this," cried Sir William, "be as you have stated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your offence; and though your conduct might have been more generous, in not suffering this gentleman to be oppressed by subordinate tyranny, yet it has been at least equitable."

"He cannot contradict a single particular," replied the squire: "I defy him to do so; and several of my servants are ready to attest what I say. Thus, Sir," continued he, finding that I was silent, for in fact I could not contradict him, "thus, Sir, my own innocence is vindicated. But though, at your intreaty, I am ready to forgive this gentleman every other offence, yet his attempts to lessen me in your esteem excite a resentment that I cannot govern. And this, too, at a time when his son was actually preparing to take away my life; this, I say, was such guilt, that I am determined to let the law take its course. I have here the challenge that was sent me, and two witnesses to prove it. One of my servants has been wounded dangerously; and even though my uncle himself should dissuade me, which I know he will not, yet I will see public justice done, and he shall suffer for it."

"Thou monster!" cried my wife; "hast thou not had vengeance enough already, but must my poor boy feel thy cruelty? I hope that good Sir William will protect us, for my son is as innocent as a child; I am sure he is, and never did harm to man."

"Madam," replied the good man, "your wishes for his safety are not greater than mine; but I am sorry to find his guilt too plain; and if my nephew persists—" But the appearance of Jenkinson and the jailer's two servants now called off our attention; who entered, hauling in a tall man, very genteelly dressed, and answering the description already given of the ruffian who had carried off my daughter.—"Here," cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, "here we have him; and if ever there was a candidate for Tyburn, this is one."

The moment Mr. Thornhill perceived the prisoner and Jen-

kinson, who had him in custody, he seemed to shrink backward with terror: his face became pale with conscious guilt; and he would have withdrawn, but Jenkinson, who perceived his design, stopped him.—“What, Squire,” cried he, “are you ashamed of your two old acquaintances, Jenkinson and Baxter? But this is the way that all great men forget their friends, though I am resolved we will not forget you.—Our prisoner, please your honour,” continued he, turning to Sir William, “has already confessed all. This is the gentleman reported to be so dangerously wounded. He declares that it was Mr. Thornhill who first put him upon the affair; that he gave him the clothes he now wears, to appear like a gentleman, and furnished him with the post-chaise. The plan was laid between them that he should carry off the young lady to a place of safety, and that there he should threaten and terrify her; but Mr. Thornhill was to come in, in the mean time, as if by accident, to her rescue; and that they should fight awhile, and then he was to run off; by which Mr. Thornhill would have the better opportunity of gaining her affections himself, under the character of her defender.”

Sir William remembered the coat to have been frequently worn by his nephew, and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account; concluding that Mr. Thornhill had often declared to him that he was in love with both sisters at the same time.

“Heavens!” cried Sir William, “what a viper have I been fostering in my bosom!—and so fond of public justice, too, as he seemed to be! But he shall have it; secure him, Mr. Jailer—yet hold, I fear there is no legal evidence to detain him.”

Upon this Mr. Thornhill, with the utmost humility, entreated that two such abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidences against him, but that his servants should be examined. “Your servants!” replied Sir William; “wretch, call them yours no longer. But come, let us hear what those fellows have to say; let the butler be called.”

When the butler was introduced, he soon perceived by his former master’s looks that all his power was now over. “Tell me,” cried Sir William, sternly, “have you ever seen your master and

that fellow dressed up in his clothes in company together?"—"Yes, please your honour," cried the butler, "a thousand times. He was the man that always brought him his ladies."—"How," interrupted young Mr. Thornhill, "this to my face?"—"Yes," replied the butler, "or to any man's face. To tell you a truth, Master Thornhill, I never either loved or liked you, and I don't care if I tell you now a piece of my mind."—"Now, then," cried Jenkinson, "tell his honour whether you know any thing of me."—"I can't say," replied the butler, "that I know much good of you. The night that gentleman's daughter was deluded to our house, you was one of them."—"So, then," cried Sir William, "I find you have brought a very fine witness to prove your innocence. Thou stain to humanity! to associate with such wretches! But" (continuing his examination) "you tell me, Mr. Butler, that this was the person who brought him this old gentleman's daughter?"—"No, please your honour," replied the butler, "he did not bring her, for the squire himself undertook that business; but he brought the priest that pretended to marry them."—"It is but too true," cried Jenkinson, "I cannot deny it; that was the employment assigned to me, and I confess it to my confusion."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Baronet, "how every new discovery of his villany alarms me. All his guilt is now too plain, and I find his present prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice, and revenge;—at my request, Mr. Jailer, set this young officer, now your prisoner, free, and trust to me for the consequences. I'll make it my business to set the affair in a proper light to my friend the magistrate who has committed him. But where is the unfortunate young lady herself? let her appear to confront this wretch; I long to know by what arts he has seduced her. Entreat her to come in. Where is she?"

"Ah, Sir," said I, "that question stings me to the heart: I was once indeed happy in a daughter, but her miseries—" Another interruption here prevented me; for who should make her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was next day to have been married to Mr. Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprise at seeing Sir William and his nephew here before her; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened that she and the old gentleman her father were passing through the town, on their way to her aunt's, who had insisted that her nuptials with

Mr. Thornhill should be consummated at her house; but stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there from the window that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street; and instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learned from him some account of our misfortunes, but was still kept ignorant of young Mr. Thornhill's being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the impropriety of going to a prison to visit us, yet they were ineffectual; she desired the child to conduct her, which he did: and it was thus she surprised us at a juncture so unexpected.

Nor can I go on without a reflection on those accidental meetings, which, though they happen every day, seldom excite our surprise but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous concurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives! How many seeming accidents must unite, before we can be clothed or fed! The peasant must be disposed to labour, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply.

We all continued silent for some moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compassion and astonishment, which gave new finishings to her beauty. "Indeed, my dear Mr. Thornhill," cried she to the squire, who she supposed was come here to succour and not to oppress us, "I take it a little unkindly that you should come here without me, or never inform me of the situation of a family so dear to us both. You know I should take as much pleasure in contributing to the relief of my reverend old master here, whom I shall ever esteem, as you can; but I find that, like your uncle, you take a pleasure in doing good in secret."

"He find pleasure in doing good!" cried Sir William, interrupting her; "No, my dear; his pleasures are as base as he is. You see in him, Madam, as complete a villain as ever disgraced humanity; a wretch who, after having deluded this poor man's daughter, after plotting against the innocence of her sister, has thrown the father into prison, and the eldest son into fetters, because he had courage to face her betrayer. And give me leave, Madam, now to congratulate you upon an escape from the embraces of such a monster."

"O goodness," cried the lovely girl, "how have I been deceived! Mr. Thornhill informed me, for certain, that this gentleman's eldest son, Captain Primrose, was gone off to America with his new-married lady."

"My sweetest miss," cried my wife, "he has told you nothing but falsehoods. My son George never left the kingdom, nor ever was married. Though you have forsaken him, he has always loved you too well to think of any body else; and I have heard him say he would die a bachelor for your sake." She then proceeded to expatiate upon the sincerity of her son's passion; she set his duel with Mr. Thornhill in a proper light; from thence she made a rapid digression to the squire's debaucheries, his pretended marriages; and ended with a most insulting picture of his cowardice.

"Good heavens!" cried Miss Wilmot, "how very near have I been to the brink of ruin! but how great is my pleasure to have escaped it! Ten thousand falsehoods has this gentleman told me! He had at last art enough to persuade me, that my promise to the only man I esteemed was no longer binding, since he had been unfaithful. By his falsehoods, I was taught to detest one equally brave and generous."

But by this time my son was freed from the incumbrances of justice, as the person supposed to be wounded was detected to be an impostor. Mr. Jenkinson, also, who had acted as his valet-de-chambre, had dressed up his hair, and furnished him with whatever was necessary to make a genteel appearance. He now therefore entered, handsomely dressed in his regimentals; and without vanity, for I am above it, he appeared as handsome a fellow as ever wore a military dress. As he entered, he made Miss Wilmot a modest and distant bow; for he was not as yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favour. But no decorums could restrain the impatience of his blushing mistress to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to discover the real sensations of her heart, for having forgotten her former promise, and having suffered herself to be deluded by an impostor. My son appeared amazed at her condescension, and could scarce believe it real. "Sure, Madam," cried he, "this is but delusion? I can never have merited this! To be blessed thus is to be too happy."—"No, Sir," replied she, "I have been deceived, basely deceived; else

nothing could have ever made me unjust to my promise. You know my friendship, you have long known it; but forget what I have done, and as you once had my warmest vows of constancy, you shall now have them repeated; and be assured, that if your Arabella cannot be yours, she shall never be another's."—"And no other's you shall be," cried Sir William, "if I have any influence with your father."

This hint was sufficient for my son Moses, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumstance that had happened. But in the mean time, the squire perceiving that he was on every side undone, now finding that no hopes were left from flattery or dissimulation, concluded that his wisest way would be to turn and face his pursuers. Thus, laying aside all shame, he appeared the open hardy villain.—"I find, then," cried he, "that I am to expect no justice here; but I am resolved it shall be done me. You shall know, Sir," turning to Sir William, "I am no longer a dependant upon your favours. I scorn them. Nothing can keep Miss Wilmot's fortune from me, which, I thank her father's assiduity, is pretty large. The articles, and a bond for her fortune, are signed, and safe in my possession. It was her fortune, not her person, that induced me to wish for this match; and possessed of the one, let who will take the other."

This was an alarming blow. Sir William was sensible of the justness of his claims, for he had been instrumental in drawing up the marriage articles himself. Miss Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably lost, turning to my son, she asked if the loss of fortune could lessen her value to him. "Though fortune," said she, "is out of my power, at least I have my hand to give."

"And that, Madam," cried her real lover, "was indeed all that you ever had to give; at least all that I ever thought worth the acceptance. And I now protest, my Arabella, by all that's happy, your want of fortune at this moment increases my pleasure, as it serves to convince my sweet girl of my sincerity."

Mr. Wilmot now entering, he seemed not a little pleased at the danger his daughter had just escaped, and readily consented to a dissolution of the match. But finding that her fortune, which was secured to Mr. Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his disappointment. He now saw

that his fortune must all go to enrich one who had no fortune of his own. He could bear his being a rascal, but to want an equivalent to his daughter's fortune was wormwood. He sat, therefore, for some minutes, employed in the most mortifying speculations, till Sir William attempted to lessen his anxiety. "I must confess, Sir," cried he, "that your present disappointment does not entirely displease me. Your immoderate passion for wealth is now justly punished. But though the young lady cannot be rich, she has still a competence sufficient to give content. Here you see an honest young soldier, who is willing to take her without a fortune; they have long loved each other, and for the friendship I bear his father, my interest shall not be wanting in his promotion. Leave, then, that ambition which disappoints you, and for once admit that happiness which courts your acceptance."

"Sir William," replied the old gentleman, "be assured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor will I now. If she still continues to love this young gentleman, let her have him with all my heart. There is still, thank Heaven, some fortune left; and your promise will make it something more. Only let my old friend here," meaning me, "give a promise of settling six thousand pounds upon my girl, if ever he should come to his fortune, and I am ready this night to be the first to join them together."

As it now remained with me to make the young couple happy, I readily gave a promise of making the settlement he required; which, from one who had such little expectations as I, was no great favour. We had now, therefore, the satisfaction of seeing them fly into each other's arms in a transport. "After all my misfortunes," cried my son George, "to be thus rewarded! Sure this is more than I could ever have presumed to hope for! To be possessed of all that's good, and after such an interval of pain! my warmest wishes could never rise so high!"—"Yes, my George," returned his lovely bride; "now let the wretch take my fortune; since you are happy without it, so am I. O, what an exchange have I made, from the basest of men to the dearest, best! Let him enjoy our fortune; I now can be happy even in indigence."—"And I promise you," cried the squire, with a malicious grin, "that I shall be very happy with what you despise."—"Hold, hold, Sir!" cried Jenkinson, "there are

two words to that bargain. As for that lady's fortune, Sir, you shall never touch a single stiver of it. Pray, your honour," continued he to Sir William, "can the squire have this lady's fortune, if he be married to another?"—"How can you make such a simple demand?" replied the Baronet, "undoubtedly he cannot."—"I am sorry for that," cried Jenkinson; "for as this gentleman and I have been old fellow-sporters, I have a friendship for him. But I must declare, well as I love him, that his contract is not worth a tobacco-stopper, for he is married already."—"You lie, like a rascal," returned the squire, who seemed roused by this insult; "I never was legally married to any woman."—"Indeed, begging your honour's pardon," replied the other, "you were; and I hope you will show a proper return of friendship to your own honest Jenkinson, who brings you a wife; and if the company restrain their curiosity a few minutes, they shall see her."—So saying, he went off with his usual celerity, and left us all unable to form any probable conjecture as to his design.—"Ay, let him go," cried the squire; "whatever else I may have done, I defy him there. I am too old now to be frightened with squibs."

"I am surprised," said the Baronet, "what the fellow can intend by this. Some low piece of humour, I suppose!"—"Perhaps, Sir," replied I, "he may have a more serious meaning. For when we reflect on the various schemes this gentleman has laid to seduce innocence, perhaps some one more artful than the rest has been found able to deceive him. When we consider what numbers he has ruined, how many parents now feel with anguish the infamy and the contamination which he has brought into their families, it would not surprise me if some of them—Amazement! do I see my lost daughter!—do I hold her!—it is, it is my life, my happiness! I thought thee lost, my Olivia, yet still I hold thee,—and still thou shalt live to bless me." The warmest transports of the fondest lover were not greater than mine, when I saw him introduce my child, and held my daughter in my arms, whose silence only spoke her raptures. "And art thou returned to me, my darling," cried I, "to be my comfort in age?"—"That she is," cried Jenkinson, "and make much of her; for she is your own honourable child, and as honest a woman as any in the whole room, let the other be who she will. And as for you, Squire, as sure as you stand here, this young

lady is your lawful wedded wife : and to convince you that I speak nothing but truth, here is the licence by which you were married together." So saying, he put the licence into the Baronet's hands, who read it, and found it perfect in every respect. "And now, gentlemen," continued he, "I find you are surprised at all this; but a very few words will explain the difficulty. That there squire of renown, for whom I have a great friendship, but that's between ourselves, has often employed me in doing odd little things for him. Among the rest, he commissioned me to procure him a false license and a false priest, in order to deceive this young lady. But as I was very much his friend, what did I do but went and got a true license and a true priest, and married them both as fast as the cloth could make them. Perhaps you'll think it was generosity that made me do all this. But no. To my shame I confess it, my only design was to keep the license, and let the squire know that I could prove it upon him whenever I thought proper, and so make him come down whenever I wanted money." A burst of pleasure now seemed to fill the whole apartment; our joy even reached the common room, where the prisoners themselves sympathised,

—and shook their chains
In transport and rude harmony!

Happiness was expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheek seemed flushed with pleasure. To be thus restored to reputation, to friends, and fortune, at once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay, and restore former health and vivacity. But perhaps, among all, there was not one who felt sincerer pleasure than I. Still holding the dear-loved child in my arms, I asked my heart if these transports were not a delusion? "How could you," cried I, turning to Jenkinson, "how could you add to my miseries, by the story of her death? But it matters not; my pleasure at finding her again, is more than a recompense for the pain."

"As to your question," replied Jenkinson, "that is easily answered. I thought the only probable means of freeing you from prison, was by submitting to the squire, and consenting to his marriage with the other young lady. But these you had vowed

never to grant while your daughter was living; there was, therefore, no other method to bring things to bear, but by persuading you that she was dead. I prevailed on your wife to join in the deceit, and we have not had a fit opportunity of undeceiving you till now."

In the whole assembly there now appeared only two faces that did not glow with transport. Mr. Thornhill's assurance had entirely forsaken him. He now saw the gulf of infamy and want before him, and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and in a voice of piercing misery implored compassion. Sir William was going to spurn him away, but at my request he raised him; and after pausing a few moments, "Thy vices, crimes, and ingratitude," cried he, "deserve no tenderness; yet thou shalt not be entirely forsaken; a bare competence shall be supplied, to support the wants of life, but not its follies. This young lady, thy wife, shall be put in possession of a third part of that fortune which once was thine; and from her tenderness alone thou art to expect any extraordinary supplies for the future." He was going to express his gratitude for such kindness in a set speech; but the Baronet prevented him, by bidding him not to aggravate his meanness, which was already but too apparent. He ordered him at the same time to be gone, and from all his former domestics to choose one, such as he should think proper, which was all that should be granted to attend him.

As soon as he left us, Sir William very politely stepped up to his new niece with a smile, and wished her joy. His example was followed by Miss Wilmot and her father; my wife, too, kissed her daughter with much affection, as, to use her own expression, she was now made an honest woman of. Sophia and Moses followed in turn; and even our benefactor, Jenkinson, desired to be admitted to that honour. Our satisfaction seemed scarcely capable of increase. Sir William, whose greatest pleasure was in doing good, now looked round with a countenance open as the sun, and saw nothing but joy in the looks of all, except that of my daughter Sophia, who, for some reasons we could not comprehend, did not seem perfectly satisfied. "I think now," cried he, with a smile, "that all the company, except one or two, seem perfectly happy. There only

remains an act of justice for me to do. You are sensible, Sir," continued he, turning to me, "of the obligations we both owe to Mr. Jenkinson; and it is but just we should both reward him for it. Miss Sophia will, I am sure, make him very happy; and he shall have from me five hundred pounds as her fortune; and upon this I am sure they can live very comfortably together. Come, Miss Sophia, what say you to this match of my making? will you have him?" My poor girl seemed almost sinking into her mother's arms at the hideous proposal. "Have him, Sir!" cried she, faintly—"no, Sir, never."—"What!" cried he again, "not have Mr. Jenkinson, your benefactor, a handsome young fellow, with five hundred pounds and good expectations?"—"I beg, Sir," returned she, scarce able to speak, "that you'll desist, and not make me so very wretched."—"Was ever such obstinacy known," cried he again, "to refuse the man whom the family has such infinite obligations to, who has preserved your sister, and who has five hundred pounds! What, not have him?"—"No, Sir, never," replied she, angrily; "I'd sooner die first!"—"If that be the case, then," cried he, "if you will not have him—I think I must have you myself." And so saying, he caught her to his breast with ardour. "My loveliest, my most sensible of girls," cried he, "how could you ever think your own Burchell could deceive you, or that Sir William Thornhill could ever cease to admire a mistress that loved him for himself alone? I have for some years sought for a woman, who, a stranger to my fortune, could think that I had merit as a man. After having tried in vain, even among the pert and the ugly, how great at last must be my rapture to have made a conquest over such sense and such heavenly beauty!" Then, turning to Jenkinson, "as I cannot, Sir, part with this young lady myself, for she has taken a fancy to the cut of my face, all the recompense I can make is, to give you her fortune; and you may call upon my steward to-morrow for five hundred pounds."

Thus we had all our compliments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill underwent the same round of ceremony as her sister had done before. In the mean time, Sir William's gentleman appeared, to tell us that the equipages were ready to carry us to the inn, where every thing was prepared for our reception. My wife and I led the van, and left these gloomy mansions of sor-

row. The generous Baronet ordered forty pounds to be distributed among the prisoners; and Mr. Wilmot, induced by his example, gave half that sum. We were received below by the shouts of the villagers; and I saw and shook by the hand two or three of my honest parishioners, who were among the number. They attended us to our inn, where a sumptuous entertainment was provided, and coarser provisions were distributed in great quantities among the populace.

After supper, as my spirits were exhausted by the alternation of pleasure and pain which they had sustained during the day, I asked permission to withdraw; and leaving the company in the midst of their mirth, as soon as I found myself alone, I poured out my heart in gratitude to the giver of joy as well as of sorrow, and then slept undisturbed till morning.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The conclusion.

THE next morning, as soon as I awaked, I found my eldest son sitting at my bedside, who came to increase my joy with another turn of fortune in my favour. First having released me from the settlement that I had made the day before in his favour, he let me know that my merchant, who had failed in town, was arrested at Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generosity pleased me almost as much as this unlooked-for good fortune; but I had some doubts whether I ought in justice to accept his offer. While I was pondering upon this, Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts; his opinion was, that as my son was already possessed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without any hesitation. His business, however, was to inform me,

that as he had the night before sent for the licenses, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuse my assistance in making all the company happy that morning. A footman entered while we were speaking, to tell us that the messenger was returned; and as I was by this time ready, I went down, where I found the whole company as merry as affluence and innocence could make them. However, as they were now preparing for a very solemn ceremony, their laughter entirely displeased me. I told them of the grave, becoming, and sublime deportment they should assume upon this mystical occasion, and read them two homilies, and a thesis of my own composing, in order to prepare them. Yet they still seemed perfectly refractory and ungovernable. Even as we were going along to church, to which I led the way, all gravity had quite forsaken them, and I was often tempted to turn back in indignation. In church a new dilemma arose, which promised no easy solution. This was, which couple should be married first; my son's bride warmly insisted, that Lady Thornhill (that was to be) should take the lead; but this the other refused with equal ardour, protesting she would not be guilty of such rudeness for the world. The argument was supported for some time between both, with equal obstinacy and good breeding. But as I stood all this time with my book ready, I was at last quite tired of the contest, and shutting it, "I perceive," cried I, "that none of you have a mind to be married, and I think we had as good go back again; for I suppose there will be no business done here to-day."—This at once reduced them to reason. The Baronet and his lady were first married, and then my son and his lovely partner.

I had previously that morning given orders that a coach should be sent for my honest neighbour Flamborough and his family; by which means, upon our return to the inn, we had the pleasure of finding the two Miss Flamboroughs alighted before us. Mr. Jenkinson gave his hand to the eldest, and my son Moses led up the other (and I have since found that he has taken a real liking to the girl, and my consent and bounty he shall have, whenever he thinks proper to demand them). We were no sooner returned to the inn, but numbers of my parishioners, hearing of my success, came to congratulate me; but among the rest

were those who rose to rescue me, and whom I formerly rebuked with such sharpness. I told the story to Sir William, my son-in-law, who went out and reproved them with great severity; but finding them quite disheartened by his harsh reproof, he gave them half a guinea a-piece to drink his health and raise their dejected spirits.

Soon after this, we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dressed by Mr. Thornhill's cook. And it may not be improper to observe, with respect to that gentleman, that he now resides in quality of companion at a relation's house, being very well liked, and seldom sitting at the side-table except when there is no room at the other; for they make no stranger of him. His time is pretty much taken up in keeping his relation, who is a little melancholy, in spirits, and in learning to blow the French horn. My eldest daughter, however, still remembers him with regret; and she has even told me, though I make a great secret of it, that when he reforms, she may be brought to relent. But to return, for I am not apt to digress thus, when we were to sit down to dinner, our ceremonies were going to be renewed. The question was, whether my eldest daughter, as being a matron, should not sit above the two young brides; but the debate was cut short by my son George, who proposed that the company should sit indiscriminately, every gentleman by his lady. This was received with great approbation by all, excepting my wife; who I could perceive was not perfectly satisfied, as she expected to have had the pleasure of sitting at the head of the table, and carving the meat for all the company. But notwithstanding this, it is impossible to describe our good humour. I cannot say whether we had more wit among us now than usual; but I am certain we had more laughing, which answered the end as well. One jest I particularly remember; old Mr. Wilmot drinking to Moses, whose head was turned another way, my son replied, "Madam, I thank you." Upon which the old gentleman, winking upon the rest of the company, observed that he was thinking of his mistress. At which jest I thought the two Miss Flamboroughs would have died with laughing. As soon as dinner was over, according to my old custom, I requested that the table might be taken away, to have the pleasure of seeing all my family assembled once more by a

cheerful fireside. My two little ones sat upon each knee, the rest of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for; all my cares were over, my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.

THE END.



A

SIMPLE STORY.

Elizabeth

BY MRS. [^]INCHBALD.



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1833.

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MEMOIR OF MRS. INCHBALD.

As an authentic memoir of Mrs. Inchbald, composed from documents in her own hand-writing, is shortly to be published, we shall confine ourselves, to a detail of the leading facts of her life which have never yet been given with even tolerable accuracy.

Elizabeth Inchbald was the last child but one of the numerous family of John and Mary Simpson, of Standingfield, in Suffolk, and born on the 15th of October, 1753. Her father died when she was but eight years old, and her mother was left to struggle, deeply encumbered, with the concerns of a farm which we believe was the sole source of profit, and indeed maintenance, to the family.

Mrs. Inchbald has told us that she never was sent to school, and never had any governess or preceptor. In that particular she resembled Miss Burney, another writer of novels, and her equal in the delineation of character and passion. But the latter lady lived at least in the atmosphere of letters, and her father was a man of science and refinement.

The family of the Simpsons was Catholic; and the neighbourhood abounded in respectable persons of that communion, who willingly extended their friendship to the interesting farmhouse at Standingfield, where the daughters were spoken of as amiable and handsome girls; Elizabeth particularly admired, though she has candidly admitted that her sister Deborah was handsomer than herself. Elizabeth had a defect to surmount, which caused her infinite vexation—she, from her infancy, stammered; and yet the early passion of her mind was to be an actress.

Bury and its fair supplied them with amusements, and the

theatre there gave to her brother George his love of dramatic representations: he came home from this seat of his enjoyments an actor in embryo, and unconsciously, perhaps, encouraged his sister in the secret design she had meditated. She was confirmed in it after by his really entering the profession. As to her impediment, she wrote out all the words with which she had difficulty, and by slow articulation, and a measured manner, disciplined her organs of speech.

Sanguine as youth may be, it seldom calculates more erroneously than when it applies, with its natural timidity and inexperience, to a country manager for an engagement on his stage as a means of provision in life. Beauty, it is true, will do something; and the female *débutante* is seldom awkward, which the males at first are sure to be. But the requisites for a *comp de main* are those of intrepid nature. If discipline is needed to perfect the actress, she must find it through successive barns, and play-houses little better, incessant variety of parts, and audiences equally composed of ignorance and prejudice.

Miss Simpson, under injunctions of secrecy, wrote to Mr. Griffith, who at that time had the management of the Norwich theatre, to give her an engagement, if he judged her abilities worthy of encouragement. He wrote a reply of the doubtful gender, and they had interviews, too, of a charming description; but he avoided every thing like engagement. She now saw the necessity of striking at the heart; and therefore determined, with the Wronghead family, upon a "Journey to London."

On the 7th of May, 1771, she came to London on a visit to her sister Hunt, whose husband was a tailor, and resided in Southampton Buildings, Holborn, in one of its courts. Mr. James Hunt had married another of her sisters. Two more of them were the wives of Mr. Huggins and Mr. Slender; so that London, unless she chose mystery and inconvenience, always offered her choice of asylum and associates. With her relations she visited the usual sights of the metropolis—the museum, the play-houses, the public gardens. She had, in the country, received Mr. Inchbald's addresses, and now attended most to his personal friends. He accompanied her to Vauxhall, and they supped together at a tavern; after which he took leave of her

on setting out for Birmingham. Three days after, she left London for home, on the 4th of June.

Inchbald corresponded with both mother and daughter at Standingfield, and their letters were thickly interchanged the whole year. It was not till March, 1772, that she determined upon a new adventure.—On the 10th of April, she packed up her things, and wrote a “farewell letter” to her mother. On the 11th, left home unsuspected, and by the Norwich Fly arrived safely and quite unexpected again in the “great city.” She got lodgings at the Rose and Crown, in St. John Street.

She now put in execution the grand part of her project, namely, to see Mr. Reddish the tragedian, and Mr. King the comedian, and beg their assistance as to the stage. King, a man of kindly feelings, talked much with her, and promised to visit her at the Rose and Crown in St. John Street. He did not arrive, and in a panic she suddenly abdicated; and, after some “strange adventures,” as she calls them, got new lodgings at midnight, as a passenger disappointed of a place in the stage, at the White Swan on Holborn Bridge. On the 15th of this Fool-month she again visited King, who gave her some faint hopes. She then sat down and wrote, on the 16th and 17th, a letter to her sister, D. Hunt, detailing her pennyless “misventures”—took it herself to the post, kept her chamber the rest of the day, and began her theatrical studies *en attendant* a reply from sister Hunt. A stranger, whose name was Redman, found out her residence, and wrote to her:—she answered his letters, met her sister in pursuance of her answer, and they drank tea together at a public garden. On the 21st, while calling upon Mr. King, her brother Slender came in her way, and demanding her address, threatened her with a chaise and Standingfield next day. On the 22d, Inchbald met her at Slender’s, and they had intercourse daily. In May, she was negotiating an engagement for the country with Dodd, which was absolutely concluded in about ten days; but, upon a visit to him, she saw some unequivocal symptoms of his bad management—threw a basin of hot water in his face, and wrote to him to justify her conduct from the provocation. Inchbald saw that this unprotected state of hers should be closed as speedily as possible;

and declared, to her great delight, that he hoped he should be able to marry her. On the evening of the 9th of June, 1772, Mr. Rice, a Catholic priest, came to sister Slender's and married them. On the 10th they went to church, and were married by the Protestant rites, and her sister Slender and she went to the theatre, and saw Mr. Inchbald act Oakly in the *Jealous Wife*. With her husband she soon set off for Bristol.—She made her first appearance on the stage, in *Cordelia*, on the 4th of September, to her husband's *Lear*. On the 18th they came back to London, and on the 7th of October set off in the *Bury* stage on a visit to her mother at Standingfield: they could make but a short visit, for they were obliged to return to London to take shipping for Scotland:—they had a stormy week's passage, and landed at Leith on the 17th. Her husband, Wilson (*Don Jerome*), and she, went post to Glasgow, where they arranged with Digges that she should act *Cordelia* on the 26th. On the removal of the company to Edinburgh, we find a Mr. Stirling playing *Iago* to Mr. Inchbald's *Othello*, for the benefit of husband and wife. This gentleman had spent the evening with her, in her husband's absence, on the 7th of January, and from that time their intimacy increased, till our heroine seems to have “more needed the divine than the physician.” She grew uneasy, wrote, two or three times, the state of things to her spiritual director; and insisted, with Mr. Stirling, upon being alone in the absence of Mr. Inchbald. That gentleman, who complained of her indifference to him, chose to be absent, and high words ensued, and separate chambers were demanded by the lady. In the mean time, Mr. Stirling resumed his seat, read to her while Inchbald was abroad, and, very indiscreetly, we think, she indulged herself in a correspondence with him during absence. With Digges they continued, and acted the usual north circuit until the middle of June, 1776, when Mr. Inchbald unhappily had a dispute with the Edinburgh audience, and a riot, in consequence, closed their engagement.

Mrs. Inchbald, with the aid of a master, had been studying the French language while in Scotland; and now, of all the absurdities with which, at times, even clever people are carried away, Mr. Inchbald resolved to go to Paris, and make his liveli-

hood by his talent as an artist—his wife, in the mean time, as a *bel esprit*, was to become a perfect Frenchwoman, and realize all the visions of authorship, which, while speaking the language of the stage, might have entered her imagination. They took shipping at Shields on the 7th of July, and landed at St. Valeri, in France, on the 23d. They arrived, at length, in Paris; and the French evinced their accustomed *politesse* to a beauty, a wit, and a Catholic, of the rival nation. On the 31st of August she had begun a farce, but had left Paris; and Mr. Inchbald had, perhaps, finished a portrait of his wife. Some absurd biographers have made them continue abroad five years; and the least inaccurate about a year: they left Dieppe, however, on the 18th of September, and were back at Brighton on the following day, to try for strolling engagements, with a “wrangling character” from Edinburgh; and often were compelled to go without dinner or tea, unless a raw turnip, pluckt up in the fields, could constructively pass for either, or both. This tour of five years, therefore, was completed in 57 days: such is the authentication of biography.

To London they at last came, and quitted it for Chester; whence they proceeded the next day to Liverpool, and met there with a liberal engagement from the manager, Younger. Through October and November they played there with much success; on the 9th of December they acted for the benefit of Mr. and Miss Farren, and on the 17th arrived at Manchester. At this town, on the 18th of January, 1777, they drank tea and supped at Mrs. Siddon’s, and there saw her brother, Kemble, for the first time. A very intimate acquaintance was commenced between these clever people at once. Kemble, though never a lover, seems to have been the cause of many disputes between his new friends. In March they took country lodgings on Russel Moor, where they seem to have rusticated most agreeably, with the Siddons and *the* Kemble; the latter as playful as a boy, and the future queen of tears singing over her household labour, without a dream of the greatness she was so soon to achieve. Their next stage was that of York for Mrs. Siddons, and Birmingham for the party. When the friends were sundered by different engagements, the Inchbalds, very

unhappy, came to London, on their way to Canterbury. On the 2d of July they reached the City of Pilgrims, and then had neither tea nor supper, and the day following, neither dinner nor tea. On the 24th they began to act with Dimond, and continued at Canterbury till the 22d of September, when they determined to pass some time at Standingfield.

Their grand card was the York Company; and they at length succeeded to their hearts' content. Wilkinson engaged them both; and when they left the maternal dwelling, on the 13th of October, it was to join their new manager at Hull. With this excellent man they continued till the unhappy death of Mr. Inchbald, on the 6th of June, 1779. It was, we learn, by an accident, and quite sudden. She simply calls that day "a day of horror," and the week that followed, one of "grief, horror, and almost despair."

On the 12th of February, 1780, Suett paid his *serious* addresses to our lovely widow. She weighed one name against the other, and poor Dicky's kicked the beam. On the 19th of September, at Doncaster, she took her leave of the York Company, and arrived safely in London; and on the 24th had her first interview with Mr. Harris of Covent-Garden theatre. The matter was soon arranged, and she acted on the London boards, the first time, Bellario, in *Philaster*, the 3d of October, 1780. There can be little doubt of her respectable utility as an actress:—In some few parts, of which the character is a feminine gentleness, and virtuous timidity, such as Lady Frances in the *Belle's Stratagem*, she was admirable. Harris proffered her *Angelina*, in the *Fop's Fortune*. But her salary was low, and did not bear her away from the train of *Harlequin*; and she was loath to suffer a deduction of 10*s.* per week, to keep her from enchanted, or enchanting, ladies, who walk in and out before every sort of scene, arrived in the stage, or landing from the packet—virgins of the sun, in Persian temples, or of the moon, if she condescends to shine upon pantomime masquerades. This alone made her engagement bitter to her; nor could she well avoid it, even at Coleman's summer house. She was in Ireland, acting with Daly, from November, 1782, to May, 1783, and handsomely paid. In vain did she try to better her

condition by offering farces to Mr. Harris:—he had no opinion of them, and she sometimes was indignant at his treatment of her and her works. In this position she had another offer of marriage, and from the Don Jerome of the *Duenna*, Richard Wilson, the old companion of her husband. This she wisely rejected.

For forty years together this amiable woman lived in London, or its immediate vicinity, cultivating assiduously her literary talents, and investing her gains in the funds. The father of her dramatic fortune was Mr. Colman the elder; who, liking the idea of her “*Mogul Tale*,” took great pains in preparing it for his stage; and also cleared out from the dust of his cabinet her comedy of “*I’ll Tell You What*,” to which he wrote both prologue and epilogue. These were followed by a “*Widow’s Vow*”—“*All on a Summer’s Day*”—“*Animal Magnetism*”—“*The Child of Nature*”—“*Midnight Hour*”—“*Such Things are*”—“*Married Man*”—“*The Hue and Cry*”—“*Next Door Neighbours*”—“*Young Men and Old Women*”—“*Every One has his Fault*”—“*The Wedding Day*”—“*Wives as they were, and Maids as they are*”—“*Lover’s Vows*”—“*The Wise Man of the East*”—“*To Marry or not to Marry*”—“*The Massacre*,” a tragedy—and the “*Case of Conscience*,” a play in five acts.

In addition to which, though certainly first in genius, we have to mention her “*Simple Story*”—and her “*Nature and Art*,”—which will be standard works to the end of time.

She practised self-denial from principle, and was instinctively charitable and liberal. Her family could not have existed, but from her bounty; and yet she contrived to realize the following income, and bequeath the principal, and something more, at her death.

In the Long Annuities, she had annually . . .	£ 222	0	0
In 3 per cent. Consols	33	0	0
In 3 per cents. Reduced.	5	5	0
Her yearly income of . . .	£260	5	0

Her place in society, during her town life, was exactly where she chose it should be. The highest ranks of nobility were proud of her visits, and their coronets were seen waiting at the door

of her lodgings, to bear her, from household toil, to take the airing of luxury and pride. Yet she never forgot, or avoided, her humble connexions; and her feeling soul never considered the station of the afflicted. Some few foibles excepted, as, for instance, the solicitude as to her beauty, and her love of admiration, we hazard little in saying, it will be difficult to name a wiser or a better woman.

The last of her many wills is dated the 29th of April, 1821; and, after a short illness, she died, a sincere Catholic, on the 1st of August following, and is interred in the churchyard of Kensington. She had nearly completed her 68th year.

Her friend Mrs. Piozzi, another memorable woman, died, at a greatly advanced age, a few months before her.

B.

London, March, 1833.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION OF "A SIMPLE STORY."

It is said, *a book should be read with the same spirit with which it has been written*. In that case, fatal must be the reception of this; for the writer frankly avows, that during the time she has been writing it she has suffered every quality and degree of weariness and lassitude into which no other employment could have betrayed her.

It has been the destiny of the writer of this story to be occupied, throughout her life, in what has the least suited either her inclination or capacity: with an invincible impediment in her speech, it was her lot, for thirteen years, to gain a subsistence by public speaking; and with the utmost detestation to the fatigue of inventing, a constitution suffering under a sedentary life, and an education confined to the narrow boundaries prescribed her sex, it has been her fate to devote a tedious seven years to the unremitting labour of literary productions; whilst a taste for authors of the first rank has been an additional punishment, forbidding her one moment of those self-approving reflections which are assuredly due to the industrious. But, alas! in the exercise of the arts, industry scarce bears the name of merit. What, then, is to be substituted in the place of genius? GOOD FORTUNE. And if these volumes should be attended by the good fortune that has accompanied her other writings, to that divinity, and that alone, she shall attribute their success.

Yet, there is a *first cause* still, to whom I cannot here forbear to mention my obligations.

The Muses, I trust, will pardon me, that to them I do not feel myself obliged; for, in justice to their heavenly inspirations, I

believe they have never yet favoured me with one visitation ; but sent in their disguise NECESSITY, who, being the mother of Invention, gave me all mine ; while FORTUNE kindly smiled, and was accessary to the cheat.

But this important secret I long wished, and endeavoured to conceal ; yet one unlucky moment candidly, though unwittingly, divulged it—I frankly owned, “ that Fortune having chased away Necessity, there remained no other incitement to stimulate me to a labour I abhorred.” It happened to be in the power of the person to whom I confided this secret, to send NECESSITY once more. Once more, then, bowing to its empire, I submit to the task it enjoins.

This case has something similar to a theatrical anecdote told, I think, by Colley Cibber.

“ A performer of a very mean salary played the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet* so exactly to the satisfaction of the audience, that this little part, independent of the other characters, drew immense houses whenever the play was performed. The manager, in consequence, thought it but justice to advance the actor’s salary ; on which the poor man (who, like the character he represented, had been half starved before) began to live so comfortably, he became too plump for the part ; and being of no importance in any thing else, the manager of course now wholly discharged him ; and thus, actually reducing him to the want of a piece of bread, in a short time he became a proper figure for the part again.”

Welcome, then, thou all-powerful principle, NECESSITY ! THOU, who art the instigator of so many bad authors and actors ; but, to their shame, not of all : THOU, who from my infancy seldom hast forsaken me, still abide with me. I will not complain of any hardship thy commands require, so thou doest not urge my pen to prostitution. In all thy rigour, oh do not force my toil to libel, or, what is equally pernicious, panegyric on the unworthy !

1791.

A

SIMPLE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

DORRIFORTH, bred at St. Omer's in all the scholastic rigour of that college, was, by education and the solemn vows of his order, a Roman Catholic priest ; but, nicely discriminating between the philosophical and the superstitious part of the character, he adopted the former only, and possessed qualities not unworthy of the first professors of Christianity. Every virtue which it was his vocation to preach it was his care to practise ; nor was he in the class of those religious, who, by secluding themselves from the world, fly from the merit they might acquire in reforming mankind. He refused to shelter himself from the temptations of the layman by the walls of a cloister ; but sought for, and found that shelter within the centre of London where he dwelt, in his own prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

He was about thirty, and had lived in the metropolis near five years, when a gentleman, above his own age, but with whom he had in his youth contracted a sincere friendship, died, and left him the sole guardian of his daughter, who was then eighteen.

The deceased Mr. Milner, on his approaching dissolution, perfectly sensible of his state, thus reasoned with himself before he made the nomination :—"I have formed no intimate friendship during my own life, except one : I can be said to know the heart of no man, except the heart of Dorriforth. After knowing his, I never sought acquaintance with another ; I did not wish to lessen the exalted estimation of human nature which he had in-

spired. In this moment of trembling apprehension for every thought which dares cross my mind, and more for every action which soon I must be called to answer for ; all worldly views here thrown aside, I act as if that tribunal, before which I every moment expect to appear, were now sitting in judgment upon my purpose. The care of an only child is the great charge which, in the tremendous crisis, I have to execute. These earthly affections that bind me to her by custom, sympathy, or what I fondly call parental love, would direct me to consult her present happiness, and leave her to the care of those whom she thinks her dearest friends; but they are friends only in the sunshine of fortune: in the cold nipping frost of disappointment, sickness, or connubial strife, they will forsake the house of care, although the very fabric which they may have themselves erected."

Here the excruciating anguish of the father overcame that of the dying man.

"In the moment of desertion," continued he, "which I now picture to myself, where will my child find comfort? That heavenly aid which religion provides, and which now, amidst these agonising tortures, cheers with humble hope my afflicted soul; that she will be denied."

It is in this place proper to remark, that Mr. Milner was a member of the church of Rome ; but on his marriage with a lady of Protestant tenets, they mutually agreed their sons should be educated in the religious opinion of their father, and their daughters in that of their mother. One child only was the result of their union ; the child whose future welfare now occupied the anxious thoughts of her expiring father. From him the care of her education had been withheld, as he kept inviolate his promise to her departed mother on the article of religion, and therefore consigned his daughter to a boarding-school for Protestants, whence she returned with merely such ideas of piety as ladies of fashion, at her age, mostly imbibe. Her little heart, employed in all the endless pursuits of personal accomplishments, had left her mind without one ornament, except such as nature gave ; and even they were not wholly preserved from the ravages made by its rival, *art*.

While her father was in health he beheld, with extreme delight, his accomplished daughter, without one fault which taste

or elegance could have imputed to her ; nor ever inquired what might be her other failings. But, cast on a bed of sickness, and upon the point of leaving her to her fate, those failings at once rushed on his thought ; and all the pride, the fond enjoyment he had taken in beholding her open the ball, or delight her hearers with her wit or song, escaped his remembrance, or, not escaping it, were lamented with a sigh of compassion, or a contemptuous frown at such frivolous qualifications.

“Something essential,” said he to himself, “must be considered—something to prepare her for an hour like this. Can I then leave her to the charge of those who themselves never remember such an hour will come? Dorriforth is the only person I know, who, uniting the moral virtues to those of religion, and pious faith to native honour, will protect without controlling, instruct without tyrannising, comfort without flattering ; and perhaps, in time, make good by choice, rather than by constraint, the tender object of his dying friend’s sole care.”

Dorriforth, who came post from London to visit Mr. Milner in his illness, received, a few moments before his death, all his injunctions, and promised to fulfil them. But, in this last token of his friend’s perfect esteem, he still was restrained from all authority to direct his ward in one religious opinion, contrary to those her mother had professed, and in which she herself had been educated.

“Never perplex her mind with any opinions that may disturb, but cannot reform,” were his latest words ; and Dorriforth’s reply gave him entire satisfaction.

Miss Milner was not with her father at this affecting period : some delicately nervous friend, with whom she was on a visit at Bath, thought proper to conceal from her not only the danger of his death, but even his indisposition, lest it might alarm a mind she thought too susceptible. This refined tenderness gave poor Miss Milner the almost insupportable agony of hearing that her father was no more, even before she was told he was not in health. In the bitterest anguish she flew to pay her last duty to his remains, and performed it with the truest filial love ; while Dorriforth, upon important business, was obliged to return to town.

CHAPTER II.

DORRIFORTH returned to London heavily afflicted for the loss of his friend; and yet, perhaps, with his thoughts more engaged upon the trust which that friend had reposed in him. He knew the life Miss Milner had been accustomed to lead: he dreaded the repulses his admonitions might possibly meet; and feared he had undertaken a task he was too weak to execute—the protection of a young woman of fashion.

Mr. Dorriforth was nearly related to one of our first catholic peers: his income was by no means confined, but approaching to affluence; yet such was his attention to those in poverty, and the moderation of his own desires, that he lived in all the careful plainness of economy. His habitation was in the house of a Mrs. Horton, an elderly gentlewoman, who had a maiden niece residing with her, not many years younger than herself. But, although Miss Woodley was thirty-five, and in person exceedingly plain, yet she possessed such cheerfulness of temper, and such an inexhaustible fund of good nature, that she escaped not only the ridicule, but even the appellation of an old maid.

In this house Dorriforth had lived before the death of Mr. Horton; nor upon that event had he thought it necessary, notwithstanding his religious vow of celibacy, to fly the roof of two such innocent females as Mrs. Horton and her niece. On their part, they regarded him with all that respect and reverence which the most religious flock shows to its pastor; and his friendly society they not only esteemed a spiritual, but a temporal advantage, as the liberal stipend he allowed for his apartments and board enabled them to continue in the large and commodious house which they had occupied during the life of Mr. Horton.

Here, upon Mr. Dorriforth's return from his journey, preparations were commenced for the reception of his ward; her father having made it his request that she might, for a time at least, reside in the same house with her guardian, receive the same

visits, and cultivate the acquaintance of his companions and friends.

When the will of her father was made known to Miss Milner, she submitted without the least reluctance to all he had required. Her mind, at that time impressed with the most poignant sorrow for his loss, made no distinction of happiness that was to come; and the day was appointed, with her silent acquiescence, when she was to arrive in London, and there take up her abode, with all the retinue of a rich heiress.

Mrs. Horton was delighted with the addition this acquisition to her family was likely to make to her annual income and style of living. The good-natured Miss Woodley was overjoyed at the expectation of their new guest, yet she herself could not tell why; but the reason was, that her kind heart wanted a more ample field for its benevolence: and now her thoughts were all pleasingly employed how she should render, not only the lady herself, but even all her attendants, happy in their new situation.

The reflections of Dorriforth were less agreeably engaged: cares, doubts, fears, possessed his mind—and so forcibly possessed it, that, upon every occasion which offered, he would inquisitively endeavour to gain intelligence of his ward's disposition before he saw her; for he was, as yet, a stranger not only to the real propensities of her mind, but even to her person; a constant round of visits having prevented his meeting her at her father's, the very few times he had been at his house, since her final return from school. The first person whose opinion he, with all proper reserve, asked concerning Miss Milner, was Lady Evans, the widow of a baronet, who frequently visited at Mrs. Horton's.

But that the reader may be interested in what Dorriforth says and does, it is necessary to give some description of his person and manners. His figure was tall and elegant; but his face, except a pair of dark bright eyes, a set of white teeth, and a graceful arrangement in his clerical curls of brown hair, had not one feature to excite admiration—yet such a gleam of sensibility was diffused over each, that many persons admired his visage as completely handsome, and all were more or less attracted by it. In a word, the charm, that is here meant to be described, is a *countenance*—on *his* you read the feelings of his heart—saw all its inmost workings—the quick pulses that beat

with hope and fear, or the gentle ones that moved in a more equal course of patience and resignation. On this countenance his thoughts were portrayed; and as his mind was enriched with every virtue that could make it valuable, so was his face adorned with every expression of those virtues; and they not only gave a lustre to his aspect, but added an harmonious sound to all he uttered: it was persuasive, it was perfect elquence; whilst in his looks you beheld his thoughts moving with his lips, and ever coinciding with what he said.

With one of those expressions of countenance, which revealed anxiety of heart, and yet with that graceful restraint of all gesticulation, for which he was remarkable, even in his most anxious concerns, he addressed Lady Evans, who had called on Mrs. Horton to hear and to request the news of the day: "Your Ladyship was at Bath last spring—you know the young lady to whom I have the honour of being appointed guardian. Pray ——"

He was earnestly intent upon asking a question, but was prevented by the person interrogated.

"Dear Mr. Dorriforth, do not ask me any thing about Miss Milner: when I saw her she was very young; though, indeed, that is but three months ago, and she can't be much older now."

"She is eighteen," answered Dorriforth, colouring with regret at the doubts which this lady had increased, but not inspired.

"And she is very beautiful—that I can assure you," said Lady Evans.

"Which I call no qualification," said Dorriforth, rising from his chair in evident uneasiness.

"But where there is nothing else, let me tell you, beauty is something.

"Much worse than nothing in my opinion," returned Dorriforth.

"But now, Mr. Dorriforth, do not, from what I have said, frighten yourself, and imagine your ward worse than she really is. All I know of her is merely, that she's young, idle, indiscreet, and giddy, with half-a-dozen lovers in her suite; some coxcombs, others men of gallantry, some single, and others married."

Dorriforth started. "For the first time of my life," cried

he, with a manly sorrow, "I wish I had never known her father."

"Nay," said Mrs. Horton, who expected every thing to happen just as she wished (for neither an excellent education, the best company, nor long experience, had been able to cultivate or brighten this good lady's understanding)—"Nay," said she, "I am sure, Mr. Dorriforth, you will soon convert her from all her evil ways."

"Dear me," returned Lady Evans, "I am sure I never meant to hint at any thing evil; and for what I have said, I will give you up my authors if you please; for they were not observations of my own: all I do is to mention them again."

The good-natured Miss Woodley, who sat working at the window, an humble, but an attentive listener to this discourse, ventured here to say exactly six words: "Then don't mention them any more."

"Let us change the subject," said Dorriforth.

"With all my heart," cried Lady Evans; and I am sure it will be to the young lady's advantage."

"Is Miss Milner tall or short?" asked Mrs. Horton, still wishing for farther information.

"Oh, tall enough of all conscience," returned she: "I tell you again that no fault can be found with her person."

"But if her mind is defective," exclaimed Dorriforth, with a sigh.

"That may be improved as well as the person," cried Miss Woodley.

"No, my dear," returned Lady Evans, "I never heard of a pad to make straight an ill-shapen disposition."

"Oh, yes," answered Miss Woodley: "good company, good books, experience, and the misfortunes of others, may have more power to form the mind to virtue, than ——"

Miss Woodley was not permitted to proceed; for Lady Evans, rising hastily from her seat, cried, "I must be gone—I have a hundred people waiting for me at home—besides, were I inclined to hear a sermon, I should desire Mr. Dorriforth to preach, and not you."

Just then Mrs. Hillgrave was announced. "And here is Mrs. Hillgrave," continued she: "I believe, Mrs. Hillgrave, you know

Miss Milner; don't you? The young lady who has lately lost her father?"

Mrs. Hillgrave was the wife of a merchant who had met with severe losses: as soon as the name of Miss Milner was uttered, she lifted up her hands, and the tears started in her eyes.

"There!" cried Lady Evans, "I desire you will give your opinion of her, and I am sorry I cannot stay to hear it." Saying this, she curtsied and took her leave.

When Mrs. Hillgrave had been seated a few minutes, Mrs. Horton, who loved information equally with the most inquisitive of her sex, asked the new visiter—"if she might be permitted to know, why at the mention of Miss Milner, she had seemed so much affected."

This question exciting the fears of Dorriforth, he turned anxiously round, attentive to the reply.

"Miss Milner," answered she, "has been my benefactress, and the best I ever had." As she spoke, she took out her handkerchief and wiped away the tears that ran down her face.

"How so?" cried Dorriforth eagerly, with his own eyes moistened with joy, nearly as much as hers were with gratitude.

"My husband, at the commencement of his distresses," replied Mrs. Hillgrave, "owed a sum of money to her father, and, from repeated provocations, Mr. Milner was determined to seize upon all our effects. His daughter, however, by her intercessions, procured us time, in order to discharge the debt; and when she found *that* time was insufficient, and her father no longer to be dissuaded from his intention, she secretly sold some of her most valuable ornaments to satisfy his demand, and screen us from its consequences."

Dorriforth, pleased at this recital, took Mrs. Hillgrave by the hand, and told her, "she should never want a friend."

"Is Miss Milner tall or short?" again asked Mrs. Horton, fearing, from the sudden pause which had ensued, the subject should be dropped.

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Hillgrave.

"Is she handsome, or ugly?"

"I really can't tell."

"It is very strange you should not take notice."

"I did take notice, but I cannot depend upon my own judgment. To me she appeared beautiful as an angel; but, perhaps, I was deceived by the beauties of her disposition."

CHAPTER III.

THIS gentlewoman's visit inspired Mr. Dorriforth with some confidence in the principles and character of his ward. The day arrived on which she was to leave her late father's seat, and fix her abode at Mrs. Horton's; and her guardian, accompanied by Miss Woodley, went in his carriage to meet her, and waited at an inn on the road for her reception.

After many a sigh paid to the memory of her father, Miss Milner, upon the tenth of November, arrived at the place, half-way on her journey to town, where Dorriforth and Miss Woodley were expecting her. Besides attendants, she had with her a gentleman and lady, distant relations of her mother's, who thought it but a proper testimony of their civility to attend her part of the way,—but who so much envied her guardian the trust Mr. Milner had reposed in him, that as soon as they had delivered her safe into his care, they returned.

When the carriage, which brought Miss Milner, stopped at the inn gate, and her name was announced to Dorriforth, he turned pale—something like a foreboding of disaster trembled at his heart, and, consequently, spread a gloom over all his face. Miss Woodley was even obliged to rouse him from the dejection into which he was cast, or he would have sunk beneath it: she was obliged also to be the first to welcome his lovely charge—lovely beyond description.

But the natural vivacity, the gaiety which report had given to Miss Milner, were softened by her recent sorrow to a meek sadness—and that haughty display of charms, imputed to her manners, was changed to a pensive demeanour. The instant Dorriforth was introduced to her by Miss Woodley as her "guardian, and her deceased father's most beloved friend," she burst into

tears, knelt down to him for a moment, and promised ever to obey him as her father. He had his handkerchief to his face at the time, or she would have beheld the agitation—the remotest sensations of his heart.

This affecting introduction being over, after some minutes passed in general conversation, the carriages were again ordered; and bidding farewell to the relations who had accompanied her, Miss Milner, her guardian, and Miss Woodley departed for town; the two ladies in Miss Milner's carriage, and Dorrisforth in that in which she came.

Miss Woodley, as they rode along, made no attempts to ingratiate herself with Miss Milner; though, perhaps, such an honour might constitute one of her first wishes: she behaved to her but as she constantly behaved to every other human creature; and that was sufficient to gain the esteem of a person possessed of an understanding equal to Miss Milner's. She had penetration to discover Miss Woodley's unaffected worth, and was soon induced to reward it with the warmest friendship.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER a night's rest in London,—less violently impressed with the loss of her father, reconciled, if not already attached to her new acquaintance, her thoughts pleasingly occupied with the reflection that she was in that gay metropolis, a wild and rapturous picture of which her active fancy had often formed,—Miss Milner waked from a peaceful and refreshing sleep, with much of that vivacity, and with all those airy charms, which, for a while, had yielded their transcendent power to the weaker influence of her filial sorrow.

Beautiful as she had appeared to Miss Woodley and to Dorrisforth on the preceding day, when she joined them this morning at breakfast, re-possession of her lively elegance and dignified simplicity, they gazed at her, and at each other alternately, with astonishment: and Mrs. Horton, as she sat at the head of her

tea-table, felt herself but as a menial servant; such command has beauty when united with sense and virtue. In Miss Milner it was so united. Yet let not our over-scrupulous readers be misled, and extend their idea of her virtue so as to magnify it beyond that which frail mortals commonly possess; nor must they cavil if, on a nearer view, they find it less: but let them consider, that if she had more faults than generally belong to others, she had likewise more temptations.

From her infancy she had been indulged in all her wishes to the extreme of folly, and started habitually at the unpleasant voice of control. She was beautiful; she had been too frequently told the high value of that beauty, and thought every moment passed in wasteful idleness during which she was not gaining some new conquest. She had a quick sensibility, which too frequently discovered itself in the immediate resentment of injuries or neglect. She had, besides, acquired the dangerous character of a wit; but to which she had no real pretensions, although the most discerning critic, hearing her converse, might fall into this mistake. Her replies had all the effect of repartee, not because she possessed those qualities which can properly be called wit, but that what she said was delivered with an energy, an instantaneous and powerful conception of the sentiment, joined with a real or a well-counterfeited simplicity, a quick turn of the eye, and an arch smile. Her words were but the words of others, and, like those of others, put into common sentences: but the delivery made them pass for wit, as grace in an ill-proportioned figure will often make it pass for symmetry.

And now, leaving description, the reader must form a judgment of the ward of Dorriforth by her actions; by all the round of great or trivial circumstances that shall be related.

At breakfast, which had just begun at the commencement of this chapter, the conversation was lively on the part of Miss Milner, wise on the part of Dorriforth, good on the part of Miss Woodley, and an endeavour at all three of those qualities on the part of Mrs. Horton. The discourse at length drew from Mr. Dorriforth this observation:—

“You have a greater resemblance of your father, Miss Milner, than I imagined you had from report: I did not expect to find you so like him.”

"Nor did I, Mr. Dorriforth, expect to find you any thing like what you are!"

"No! pray what did you expect to find me?"

"I expected to find you an elderly man, and a plain man."

This was spoken in an artless manner, but in a tone which obviously declared she thought her guardian both young and handsome. He replied, but not without some little embarrassment,—“A plain man you shall find me in all my actions.”

"Then your actions are to contradict your appearance."

For in what she said, Miss Milner had the quality peculiar to wits, of hazarding the thought that first occurs, which thought is generally truth. On this, he paid her a compliment in return:—

"You, Miss Milner, I should suppose, must be a very bad judge of what is plain, and what is not."

"How so?"

"Because I am sure you will readily own you do not think yourself handsome; and allowing that, you instantly want judgment."

"And I would rather want judgment than beauty," she replied; "and so I give up the one for the other."

With a serious face, as if proposing a very serious question, Dorriforth continued — "And you really believe you are not handsome?"

"I should, if I consulted my own opinion, believe that I was not: but in some respects I am like Roman Catholics; I don't believe upon my own understanding, but from what other people tell me."

"And let this convince you," replied Dorriforth, "that what we teach is truth; for you find you would be deceived, did you not trust to persons who knew better than yourself. But, my dear Miss Milner, we will talk upon some other topic, and never resume this again. We differ in opinion, I dare say, on one subject only; and this difference, I hope, will never extend itself to any other. Therefore, let not religion be named between us; for as I have resolved never to persecute you, in pity be grateful, and do not persecute me."

Miss Milner looked with surprise that any thing so lightly said should be so seriously received. The kind Miss Woodley ejacu-

lated a short prayer to herself, that Heaven would forgive her young friend the involuntary sin of religious ignorance; while Mrs. Horton unperceived, as she imagined, made the sign of the cross upon her forehead, as a guard against the infectious taint of heretical opinions. This pious ceremony Miss Milner by chance observed, and now showed such an evident propensity to burst into a fit of laughter, that the good lady of the house could no longer contain her resentment, but exclaimed, "God forgive you," with a severity so different from the sentiment which the words conveyed, that the object of her anger was, on this, obliged freely to indulge that impulse which she had in vain been struggling to suppress; and no longer suffering under the agony of restraint, she gave way to her humour, and laughed with a liberty so uncontrolled, that it soon left her in the room with none but the tender-hearted Miss Woodley a witness of her folly.

"My dear Miss Woodley," then cried Miss Milner, after recovering herself, "I am afraid you will not forgive me."

"No, indeed I will not," returned Miss Woodley.

But how unimportant, how weak, how ineffectual are *words* in conversation, looks and manners alone express: for Miss Woodley, with her charitable face and mild accents, saying she would not forgive implied only forgiveness; while Mrs. Horton, with her enraged voice and aspect, begging Heaven to pardon the offender, palpably said, she thought her unworthy of all pardon.

CHAPTER V.

Six weeks have now elapsed since Miss Milner has been in London, partaking with delight all its pleasures; while Dorri-forth has been sighing with apprehension, attending to all her words and ways with precaution, and praying with zealous fervour for her safety. Her own and her guardian's acquaintance, and, added to them, the new friendships (to use the unmeaning

language of the world) which she was continually, forming, crowded so perpetually to the house, that seldom had Dorriforth even a moment left him from her visits or visitors, to warn her of her danger; yet when a moment offered, he caught it eagerly—pressed the necessity of “time not always passed in society; of reflection, of reading, of thoughts for a future state, and of virtues acquired to make old age supportable.” That forcible power of genuine feeling, which directs the tongue to eloquence, had its effect while she listened to him, and she sometimes put on the looks and gesture of assent; sometimes even spoke the language of conviction; but this the first call of dissipation would change to ill-timed raillery, or peevish remonstrance, at being limited in delights which her birth and fortune entitled her to enjoy.

Among the many visitors who attended at her levees, and followed her wherever she went, there was one who seemed, even when absent from her, to share her thoughts. This was Lord Frederick Lawnley, the younger son of a duke, and the avowed favourite of all the most discerning women of taste.

He was not more than twenty-three; animated, elegant, extremely handsome, and possessed of every accomplishment that would captivate a heart less susceptible of love than Miss Milner's was supposed to be. With these allurements, no wonder if she took pleasure in his company; no wonder if she took pride in having it known that he was among the number of her devoted admirers. Dorriforth beheld this growing intimacy with alternate pain and pleasure: he wished to see Miss Milner married, to see his charge in the protection of another, rather than of himself; yet under the care of a young nobleman, immersed in all the vices of the town, without one moral excellence, but such as might result eventually from the influence of the moment—under such care he trembled for her happiness; yet trembled more lest her heart should be purloined without even the authority of matrimonial views.

With sentiments like these, Dorriforth could never disguise his uneasiness at the sight of Lord Frederick; nor could the latter want penetration to discern the suspicion of the guardian; and, consequently, each was embarrassed in the presence of the other. Miss Milner observed—but observed with indifference—the sensations of both: there was but one passion which then

held a place in her bosom, and that was vanity; vanity defined into all the species of pride, vain-glory, self-approbation; an inordinate desire of admiration, and an immoderate enjoyment of the art of pleasing, for her own individual happiness, and not for the happiness of others. Still had she a heart inclined, and oftentimes affected by tendencies less unworthy; but those approaches to what was estimable, were in their first impulse too frequently met and intercepted by some darling folly.

Miss Woodley (who could easily discover a virtue, although of the most diminutive kind, and scarcely through the magnifying glass of calumny could ever perceive a fault) was Miss Milner's inseparable companion at home, and her zealous advocate with Dorrisforth, whenever, during her absence, she became the subject of discourse. He listened with hope to the praises of her friend, but saw with despair how little they were merited. Sometimes he struggled to subdue his anger, but oftener strove to suppress tears of pity for his ward's hapless state.

By this time all her acquaintance had given Lord Frederick to her as a lover; the servants whispered it, and some of the public prints had even fixed the day of marriage; but as no explanation had taken place on his part, Dorrisforth's uneasiness was increased; and he seriously told Miss Milner, he thought it would be indispensably prudent in her to entreat Lord Frederick to discontinue his visits. She smiled with ridicule at the caution; but finding it repeated, and in a manner that indicated authority, she promised not only to make, but to enforce the request. The next time he came, she did so; assuring him it was by her guardian's desire, "who, from motives of delicacy, had permitted her to solicit as a favour what he could himself make as a demand." Lord Frederick reddened with anger: he loved Miss Milner; but he doubted whether, from the frequent proofs he had experienced of his own inconstancy, he should continue to love; and this interference of her guardian threatened an explanation or a dismissal, before he became thoroughly acquainted with his own heart. Alarmed, confounded, and provoked, he replied,—

"By heaven, I believe Mr. Dorrisforth loves you himself; and it is jealousy alone that makes him treat me in this manner."

"For shame, my Lord," cried Miss Woodley, who was pre-

sent, and who trembled with horror at the sacrilegious supposition.

"Nay, shame to him, if he is not in love," answered his Lordship; "for who but a savage could behold beauty like hers without owning its power?"

"Habit," replied Miss Milner, "is every thing: Mr. Dorriforth sees and converses with beauty: but, from habit, he does not fall in love; and you, my Lord, from habit, often do."

"Then you believe that love is not in my disposition?"

"No more of it, my Lord, than habit could very soon extinguish."

"But I would not have it extinguished: I would rather it should mount to flame; for I think it a crime to be insensible of the divine blessings love can bestow."

"Then you indulge the passion to avoid a sin? This very motive deters Mr. Dorriforth from that indulgence."

"It ought to deter him, for the sake of his oaths: but monastic vows, like those of marriage, were made to be broken; and surely when your guardian cast his eyes on you, his wishes ——"

"Are never less pure," she replied eagerly, "than those which dwell in the bosom of my *celestial* guardian."

At that instant Dorriforth entered the room. The colour had mounted into Miss Milner's face, from the warmth with which she had delivered her opinion; and his accidental entrance at the very moment this praise had been conferred upon him in his absence heightened the blush to a deep glow on every feature: confusion and earnestness caused even her lips to tremble, and her whole frame to shake.

"What is the matter?" cried Dorriforth, looking with concern on her discomposure.

"A compliment paid by herself to you, sir," replied Lord Frederick, "has affected your ward in the manner you have seen."

"As if she blushed at the untruth," said Dorriforth.

"Nay, that is unkind," cried Miss Woodley; "for if you had been here ——"

"I would not have said what I did," replied Miss Milner, "but had left him to vindicate himself."

"Is it possible that I can want any vindication? Who

would think it worth their while to slander so unimportant a person as I am?"

"The man who has the charge of Miss Milner," replied Lord Frederick, "derives a consequence from her."

"No ill consequence, I hope, my Lord!" said Dorriforth, with a firmness in his voice, and with an eye so fixed, that his antagonist hesitated for a moment in want of a reply; and Miss Milner softly whispering to him, as her guardian turned his head, to avoid an argument, he bowed acquiescence. Then, as if in compliment to her, he changed the subject; and with an air of ridicule he cried,—

"I wish, Mr. Dorriforth, you would give me absolution of all my sins, for I confess they are many, and manifold."

"Hold, my Lord," exclaimed Dorriforth, "do not confess before the ladies, lest, in order to excite their compassion, you should be tempted to accuse yourself of sins you have never yet committed."

At this Miss Milner laughed, seemingly so well pleased, that Lord Frederick, with a sarcastic sneer, repeated,—

—"From Abelard it came,
And Eloisa still must love the name."

Whether from an inattention to the quotation, or from a consciousness it was wholly inapplicable, Dorriforth heard it without one emotion of shame or of anger—while Miss Milner seemed shocked at the implication; her pleasantry was immediately suppressed, and she threw open the sash and held her head out at the window, to conceal the embarrassment these lines had occasioned.

The Earl of Elmwood was at that juncture announced—a Catholic nobleman, just come of age, and on the eve of marriage. His visit was to his cousin, Mr. Dorriforth; but as all ceremonious visits were alike received by Dorriforth, Miss Milner, and Mrs. Horton's family, in one common apartment, Lord Elmwood was ushered into this, and of course directed the conversation to a different topic.

CHAPTER VI.

WITH an anxious desire that the affection, or acquaintance, between Lord Frederick and Miss Milner might be finally dissolved, her guardian received, with infinite satisfaction, overtures of marriage from Sir Edward Ashton. Sir Edward was not young or handsome, old or ugly, but immensely rich, and possessed of qualities that made him worthy of the happiness to which he aspired. He was the man whom Dorriforth would have chosen before any other for the husband of his ward; and his wishes made him sometimes hope, against his cooler judgment, that Sir Edward would not be rejected. He was resolved, at all events, to try the force of his own power in the strongest recommendation of him.

Notwithstanding that dissimilarity of opinion which, in almost every instance, subsisted between Miss Milner and her guardian, there was in general the most punctilious observance of good manners from each towards the other—on the part of Dorriforth more especially; for his politeness would sometimes appear even like the result of a system which he had marked out for himself, as the only means to keep his ward restrained within the same limitations. Whenever he addressed her there was an unusual reserve upon his countenance, and more than usual gentleness in the tone of his voice: this appeared the effect of sentiments which her birth and situation inspired, joined to a studied mode of respect, best calculated to enforce the same from her. The wished-for consequence was produced; for though there was an instinctive rectitude in the understanding of Miss Milner that would have taught her, without other instruction, what manners to observe towards her deputed father; yet, from some volatile thought, or some quick sense of feeling, which she had not been accustomed to correct, she was perpetually on the verge of treating him with levity; but he would on the instant recall her recollection by a reserve too awful, and

a gentleness too sacred for her to violate. The distinction which both required was thus, by his skilful management alone, preserved.

One morning he took an opportunity, before her and Miss Woodley, to introduce and press the subject of Sir Edward Ashton's hopes. He first spoke warmly in his praise; then plainly said that he believed she possessed the power of making so deserving a man happy to the summit of his wishes. A laugh of ridicule was the only answer; but a sudden frown from Dorriforth having silenced her mirth, he resumed his usual politeness, and said,—

"I wish you would show a better taste than thus pointedly to disapprove of Sir Edward."

"How, Mr. Dorriforth, can you expect me to give proofs of a good taste, when Sir Edward, whom you consider with such high esteem, has given so bad an example of his, in approving me?"

Dorriforth wished not to flatter her by a compliment she seemed to have sought for, and for a moment hesitated what answer to make.

"Reply, sir, to that question," she said.

"Why, then, madam," returned he, "it is my opinion, that supposing what your humility has advanced be just, yet Sir Edward will not suffer by the suggestion; for in cases where the heart is so immediately concerned, as I believe Sir Edward's to be, taste, or rather reason, has little power to act."

"You are in the right, Mr. Dorriforth: this is a proper justification of Sir Edward,—and when I fall in love, I beg that you will make the same excuse for me."

"Then," said he, earnestly, "before your heart is in that state which I have described, exert your reason."

"I shall," answered she, "and assuredly not consent to marry a man whom I could never love."

"Unless your heart be already disposed of, Miss Milner, what can make you speak with such a degree of certainty?"

"He thought on Lord Frederick when he uttered this, and he rivetted his eyes upon her as if to penetrate her most secret inclinations, and yet trembling for what he might find there. She blushed, and her looks would have confirmed her guilty,

if the unembarrassed and free tone of her voice, more than her words, had not preserved her from that sentence.

"No," she replied, "my heart is not stolen away; and yet I can venture to declare, that Sir Edward will never possess it."

"I am sorry, for both your sakes, that these are your sentiments," he replied. "But as your heart is still your own," and he seemed rejoiced to find it was, "permit me to warn you how you part with a thing so precious. The dangers, the sorrows you hazard in bestowing it, are greater than you may possibly be aware of. The heart once gone, our thoughts, our actions, are no more our own, than that is——" He seemed *forcing* himself to utter all this, and yet he broke off as if he could have said much more, if the extreme delicacy of the subject had not restricted him.

When he left the room, and she heard the door close after him, she said, with an inquisitive thoughtfulness, "What can make good people so skilled in all the weaknesses of the bad? Mr. Dorriforth, with all those prudent admonitions, appears rather like a man who has passed his life in the gay world, experienced all its dangerous allurements, all its repentant sorrows, than like one who has lived his whole time secluded in a monastic college, or in his own study. Then he speaks with such exquisite sensibility on the subject of love, that he commends the very thing which he attempts to depreciate. I do not think my Lord Frederick would make the passion appear in more pleasing colours by painting its delights, than Mr. Dorriforth could in describing its sorrows; and if he talks to me frequently in this manner, I shall certainly take pity on Lord Frederick, for the sake of his adversary's eloquence."

Miss Woodley, who heard the conclusion of this speech with the tenderest concern, cried, "Alas! you then think seriously of Lord Frederick!"

"Suppose I do, wherefore that *alas!* Miss Woodley?"

"Because I fear you will never be happy with him."

"That is plainly saying, he will not be happy with me."

"I do not know: I cannot speak of marriage from experience," answered Miss Woodley; "but I think I can guess what it is."

"Nor can I speak of love from experience," replied Miss Milner; "but I think I can guess what it is."

"But do not fall in love, my dear," cried Miss Woodley, with her accustomed simplicity of heart, as if she had been asking a favour that depended upon the will of the person entreated; "pray do not fall in love without the approbation of your guardian."

Her young friend smiled at the inefficacious prayer, but promised to do all she could to oblige her.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR EDWARD, not wholly discouraged by the denial with which Dorriforth had, with delicacy, acquainted him, still hoped for a kind reception: and he was so often at the house of Mrs. Horton, that Lord Frederick's jealousy was excited; and the tortures he suffered in consequence convinced him, beyond a doubt, of the sincerity of his affection. Every time he beheld the object of his passion (for he still continued his visits, though not so frequently as heretofore), he pleaded his cause with such ardour, that Miss Woodley, who was sometimes present, and ever compassionate, could not resist wishing him success. He now unequivocally offered marriage, and entreated that he might lay his proposals before Mr. Dorriforth; but this was positively forbidden.

Her reluctance he imputed, however, more to the known partiality of her guardian for the addresses of Sir Edward, than to any motive which depended upon herself: and to Mr. Dorriforth he conceived a greater dislike than ever; believing that through his interposition, in spite of his ward's attachment, he might yet be deprived of her. But Miss Milner declared, both to him and to her friend, that love had, at present, gained no influence over her mind. Yet did the watchful Miss Woodley oftentimes hear a sigh escape from her unknown to herself, till she was reminded of it; and then a crimson blush would instantly overspread her face. This seeming struggle with her passion endeared her more than ever to Miss Woodley; and

she would even risk the displeasure of Dorriforth by her compliance with every new pursuit that might amuse those leisure hours which her friend, she now perceived, passed in heaviness of heart.

Balls, plays, incessant company, at length roused her guardian from that mildness with which he had been accustomed to treat her. Night after night his sleep had been disturbed by fears for her when abroad: morning after morning it had been broken by the clamour of her return. He therefore gravely said to her one forenoon as he met her accidentally upon the staircase, —

“I hope, Miss Milner, you pass this evening at home?”

Unprepared for the sudden question, she blushed and replied, “Yes;” though she knew she was engaged to a brilliant assembly, for which her milliner had been consulted a whole week.

She, however, flattered herself that what she had said might be excused as a mistake, the lapse of memory, or some other trifling fault, when he should know the truth. The truth was earlier divulged than she expected; for just as dinner was removed, her footman delivered a message to her from her milliner concerning a new dress for the evening—the *present evening* particularly marked. Her guardian looked astonished!

“I thought, Miss Milner, you gave me your word that you would pass this evening at home?”

“I mistook; for I had before given my word that I should pass it abroad.”

“Indeed!” cried he.

“Yes, indeed; and I believe it is right that I should keep my first promise: is it not?”

“The promise you gave me, then, you do not think of any consequence?”

“Yes, certainly, if you do.”

“I do.”

“And mean, perhaps, to make it of more consequence than it deserves, by being offended.”

“Whether or not I *am* offended—you shall find I am.” And he looked so.

She caught his piercing eyes—hers were immediately cast down, and she trembled—either with shame or with resentment.

Mrs. Horton rose from her chair—moved the decanters and fruit round the table—stirred the fire—and came back to her chair again, before another word was uttered. Nor had this good woman's officious labours taken the least from the awkwardness of the silence, which, as soon as the bustle she had contrived was over, returned in its full force.

At last, Miss Milner, rising with alacrity, was preparing to go out of the room, when Dorriforth raised his voice, and, in a tone of authority, said,—

“Miss Milner, you shall not leave the house this evening.”

“Sir!” she exclaimed, with a kind of doubt of what she had heard; a surprise, which fixed her hand on the door she had half opened, but which now she showed herself irresolute whether to open wide in defiance, or to shut submissively. Before she could resolve, he rose from his chair, and said, with a force and warmth she had never heard him use before,—

“I command you to stay at home this evening.” And he walked immediately out of the apartment by another door.

Her hand fell motionless from that which she held—she appeared motionless herself—till Mrs. Horton, “beseeching her not to be uneasy at the treatment she had received,” made her tears flow as if her heart was breaking.

Miss Woodley would have said something to comfort her; but she had caught the infection, and could not utter a word. It was not from any real cause of grief that Miss Woodley wept; but there was a magnetic quality in tears, which always attracted hers.

Mrs. Horton secretly enjoyed this scene, though the well-meaning of her heart, and the ease of her conscience, did not suffer her to think so. She, however, declared she had “long prognosticated it would come to this;” and she “only thanked Heaven it was no worse.”

“What can be worse, madam?” cried Miss Milner. “Am not I disappointed of five ball?”

“You don't mean to go, then?” said Mrs. Horton. “I commend your prudence; and I dare say it is more than your guardian gives you credit for.”

“Do you think I would go,” answered Miss Milner, with an eagerness that, for a time, suppressed her tears, “in contradiction to his will?”

"It is not the first time, I believe, you have acted contrary to that, Miss Milner," replied Mrs. Horton, and affected a tenderness of voice to soften the harshness of her words.

"If you think so, madam, I see nothing that should prevent me now." And she went eagerly out of the room, as if she had resolved to disobey him. This alarmed poor Miss Woodley.

"My dear aunt," she cried to Mrs. Horton, "follow and prevail upon Miss Milner to give up her design: she means to be at the ball, in opposition to her guardian's will."

"Then," said Mrs. Horton, "I'll not be instrumental in deterring her. If she does go, it may be for the best: it may give Mr. Dorriforth a clearer knowledge, what means are proper to convert her from evil."

"But, my dear madam, she must be preserved from the evil of disobedience; and, as you tempted, you will be the most likely to dissuade her. But if you will not, I must endeavour."

Miss Woodley was leaving the room to perform this good work, when Mrs. Horton, in imitation of the example given her by Dorriforth, cried,—

"Niece, I command you not to stir out of this room this evening."

Miss Woodley obediently sat down; and though her thoughts and heart were in the chamber of her friend, she never marked, by one impertinent word, or by one line of her face, the restraint she suffered.

At the usual hour, Mr. Dorriforth and his ward were summoned to tea. He entered with a countenance which evinced the remains of anger: his eye gave testimony of his absent thoughts; and though he took up a pamphlet affecting to read, it was plain to discern that he scarcely knew he held it in his hand.

Mrs. Horton began to make tea with a mind as intent upon something else as Dorriforth's. She longed for the event of this misunderstanding; and though she wished no ill to Miss Millner, yet with an inclination bent upon seeing something new, without the fatigue of going out of her own house, she was not over scrupulous what that novelty might be. But for fear she should have the imprudence to speak a word upon the subject which employed her thoughts, or even to look as if she thought of it at all, she pinched her lips close together, and cast

her eyes on vacancy, lest their significant regards might expose her to detection. And for fear that any noise should intercept even the sound of what might happen, she walked across the room more softly than usual, and more softly touched every thing she was obliged to lay her hand on.

Miss Woodley thought it her duty to be mute; and now the gingle of a tea-spoon was like a deep-toned bell, all was so quiet.

Mrs. Horton, too, in the self-approving reflection that *she* was not in a quarrel or altercation of any kind, felt herself at this moment remarkably peaceful and charitable. Miss Woodley did not recollect *herself* so, but was so in reality. In her, peace and charity were instinctive virtues; accident could not increase them.

The tea had scarcely been made, when a servant came with Miss Milner's compliments, and she "did not mean to have any tea." The pamphlet shook in Dorriforth's hand while this message was delivered. He believed her to be dressing for her evening's entertainment; and now studied in what manner he should prevent or resent her disobedience to his commands. He coughed—drank his tea—endeavoured to talk, but found it difficult—sometimes he read; and in this manner near two hours were passed away, when Miss Milner came into the room—not dressed for a ball, but as she had risen from dinner. Dorriforth read on, and seemed afraid of looking up, lest he should see what he could not have pardoned. She drew a chair, and sat at the table by the side of her delighted friend.

After a few minutes' pause, and some little embarrassment on the part of Mrs. Horton, at the disappointment she had to encounter from this unexpected dutiful conduct, she asked Miss Milner, "If she would now have any tea?"—She replied, "No, I thank you, ma'am," in a voice so languid, compared with her usual one, that Dorriforth lifted up his eyes from the book; and seeing her in the same dress that she had worn all the day, turned them hastily away from her again—not with a look of triumph, but of confusion.

Whatever he might have suffered if he had seen Miss Milner decorated, and prepared to bid defiance to his commands; yet even upon that trial, he would not have endured half the painful sensations he now for a moment felt—he felt himself to blame.

He feared that he had treated her with too much severity—he admired her condescension, accused himself for having exacted it—he longed to ask her pardon—he did not know how.

A cheerful reply from her, to a question of Miss Woodley's, embarrassed him still more. He wished that she had been sullen: he then would have had a temptation, or pretence, to have been sullen too.

With all these sentiments crowding fast upon his heart he still read, or seemed to read, as if he took no notice of what was passing; till a servant came into the room and asked Miss Milner at what time she should want the carriage? to which she replied, "*I don't go out to-night.*" Dorriforth then laid the book out of his hand, and, by the time the servant had left the room, thus began:—

"Miss Milner, I give you, I fear, some unkind proofs of my regard. It is often the ungrateful task of a friend to be troublesome—sometimes unmannerly. Forgive the duties of my office, and believe that no one is half so much concerned if it robs you of any degree of happiness as I myself am."

What he said, he looked with so much sincerity, that had she been burning with rage at his late behaviour, she must have forgiven him, for the regret which he so forcibly expressed. She was going to reply, but found she could not, without accompanying her words with tears; therefore, after the first attempt, she desisted.

On this he rose from his chair, and going to her, said, "Once more show your submission by obeying me a second time to-day. Keep your appointment; and be assured that I shall issue my commands with more circumspection for the future, as I find how strictly they are complied with."

Miss Milner, the gay, the vain, the dissipated, the haughty Miss Milner, sunk underneath this kindness, and wept with a gentleness and patience, which did not give more surprise than it gave joy to Dorriforth. He was charmed to find her disposition so tractable—prophesied to himself the future success of his guardianship, and her eternal as well as temporal happiness from this specimen of compliance.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALTHOUGH Dorriforth was the good man that he has been described, there were in his nature shades of evil. There was an obstinacy, which himself and his friends termed firmness of mind; but which, had not religion and some contrary virtues weighed heavily in the balance, would have frequently degenerated into implacable stubbornness.

The child of a sister once beloved, who married a young officer against her brother's consent, was at the age of three years left an orphan, destitute of all support but from his uncle's generosity; but though Dorriforth maintained, he would never see him. Miss Milner, whose heart was a receptacle for the unfortunate, no sooner was told the melancholy history of Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook, the parents of the child, than she longed to behold the innocent inheritor of her guardian's resentment, and took Miss Woodley with her to see the boy. He was at a farmhouse a few miles from the town; and his extreme beauty and engaging manners wanted not the sorrows to which he had been born, to give him farther recommendation to the kindness of her who had come to visit him. She looked at him with admiration and pity, and having endeared herself to him by the most affectionate words and caresses,—on her bidding him farewell, he cried most piteously to go along with her. Unused at any time to resist temptations, whether to reprehensible or to laudable actions, she yielded to his supplications; and having overcome a few scruples of Miss Woodley's, determined to take young Rushbrook to town, and present him to his uncle. This design was no sooner formed than executed. By making a present to the nurse, she readily gained her consent to part with him for a day or two; and the excess of the joy denoted by the child on being placed in the carriage repaid her beforehand for every reproof she might receive from her guardian, for the liberty she had taken.

"Besides," said she to Miss Woodley, who had still her fears, "do you not wish his uncle should have a warmer interest in his care than duty? It is duty alone which induces Mr. Dorriforth to provide for him: but it is proper that affection should have some share in his benevolence; and how, when he grows older, will he be so fit an object of the love which compassion excites, as he is at present?"

Miss Woodley acquiesced. But before they arrived at their own door it came into Miss Milner's remembrance, that there was a grave sternness in the manners of her guardian when provoked; the recollection of which made her a little apprehensive for what she had done. Her friend, who knew him better than she did, was more so. They both became silent as they approached the street where they lived; for Miss Woodley having once represented her fears, and having suppressed them in resignation to Miss Milner's better judgment, would not repeat them—and Miss Milner would not confess that they were now troubling her.

Just, however, as the coach stopped at their home, she had the forecast and the humility to say, "We will not tell Mr. Dorriforth the child is his nephew, unless he should appear fond, and pleased with him, and then I think we may venture without any danger."

This was agreed; and when Dorriforth entered the room just before dinner, poor Harry Rushbrook was introduced as the son of a lady who frequently visited there. The deception passed; his uncle shook hands with him; and at length, highly pleased with his engaging manner and applicable replies, took him on his knee, and caressed him with affection. Miss Milner could scarcely restrain the joy it gave her: but unluckily Dorriforth said soon after to the child, "And now tell me your name."

"Harry Rushbrook," replied he, with force and clearness of voice,

Dorriforth was holding him fondly round the waist, as he stood with his feet upon his knees; and at this reply he did not *throw* him from him—but he removed his hands, which had supported him, so suddenly, that the child, to prevent falling on the floor, threw himself about his uncle's neck. Miss Milner and Miss Woodley turned aside to conceal their tears. "I had like to have been down," cried Harry, fearing no other danger.

But his uncle took hold of each hand which had twined around him, and placed him immediately on the ground. The dinner being that instant served, he gave no greater marks of his resentment than calling for his hat, and walking instantly out of the house.

“Miss Milner cried for anger; yet she did not show less kindness to the object of this vexatious circumstance: she held him in her arms while she sat at table, and repeatedly said to him (though he had not the sense to thank her), “That she would always be his friend.”

The first emotions of resentment against Dorriforth being passed, she returned with her little charge to the farm-house, before it was likely his uncle should come back; another instance of obedience, which Miss Woodley was impatient her guardian should know. She therefore inquired where he was gone, and sent him a note for the sole purpose of acquainting him with it, offering at the same time an apology for what had happened. He returned in the evening seemingly reconciled; nor was a word mentioned of the incident which had occurred in the former part of the day: still in his countenance remained the evidence of a perfect recollection of it, without one trait of compassion for his helpless nephew.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE are few things so mortifying to a proud spirit as to suffer by immediate comparison: men can hardly bear it, but to women the punishment is intolerable; and Miss Milner now laboured under this humiliation to a degree which gave her no small inquietude.

Miss Fenton, young, of exquisite beauty, elegant manners, gentle disposition, and discreet conduct, was introduced to Miss Milner's acquaintance by her guardian, and frequently, sometimes inadvertently, held up by him as a pattern for her to follow; for when he did not say this in direct terms, it was in-

sinated by the warmth of his panegyric on those virtues in which Miss Fenton excelled, and in which his ward was obviously deficient. Conscious of her own inferiority in these subjects of her guardian's praise, Miss Milner, instead of being inspired to emulation, was provoked to envy.

Not to admire Miss Fenton was impossible—to find one fault with her person or sentiments was equally impossible—and yet to love her was unlikely.

That serenity of mind which kept her features in a continual placid form, though enchanting at the first glance, upon a second or third fatigued the sight for want of variety; and to have seen her distorted with rage, convulsed with mirth, or in deep dejection, had been to her advantage. But her superior soul appeared above those emotions, and there was more inducement to worship her as a saint than to love her as a woman. Yet Dorriforth, whose heart was not formed (at least not educated) for love, regarding her in the light of friendship only, beheld her as the most perfect model for her sex. Lord Frederick on first seeing her was struck with her beauty, and Miss Milner apprehended she had introduced a rival; but he had not seen her three times, before he called her "the most insufferable of Heaven's creatures," and vowed there was more charming variation in the plain features of Miss Woodley.

Miss Milner had a heart affectionate to her own sex, even where she saw them in possession of superior charms; but whether from the spirit of contradiction, from [feeling herself more than ordinarily offended by her guardian's praise of this lady, or that there was a reserve in Miss Fenton that did not accord with her own frank and ingenuous disposition, so as to engage her esteem, certain it is that she took infinite satisfaction in hearing her beauty and virtues depreciated or turned into ridicule, particularly if Mr. Dorriforth was present. This was painful to him on many accounts; perhaps an anxiety for his ward's conduct was not among the least; and whenever the circumstance occurred, he could with difficulty restrain his anger. Miss Fenton was not only a person whose amiable qualities he admired; but she was soon to be allied to him by her marriage with his nearest relation, Lord Elmwood—a young nobleman whom he sincerely loved.

Lord Elmwood had discovered all that beauty in Miss Fenton

which every common observer could not but see. The charms of her mind and of her fortune had been pointed out by his tutor; and the utility of the marriage, in perfect submission to his precepts, he never permitted himself to question.

This preceptor held with a magisterial power the government of his pupil's passions; nay, governed them so entirely, that no one could perceive (nor did the young lord himself know) that he had any.

This rigid monitor and friend was a Mr. Sandford, bred a Jesuit in the same college at which Dorriforth had since been educated; but previous to his education the order had been compelled to take another name. Sandford had been the tutor of Dorriforth as well as of his cousin, Lord Elmwood; and by this double tie he seemed now entailed upon the family. As a Jesuit, he was consequently a man of learning; possessed of steadiness to accomplish the end of any design once meditated, and of sagacity to direct the views of men more powerful, but less ingenious than himself. The young earl, accustomed in his infancy to fear him as his master, in his youthful manhood received every new indulgence with gratitude, and at length loved him as a father; nor had Dorriforth as yet shaken off similar sensations.

Mr. Sandford perfectly knew how to influence the sentiments and sensations of all human kind, but yet he had the forbearance not to "draw all hearts towards him." There were some, whose hatred he thought not unworthy of his pious labours to excite; and in that pursuit he was more rapid in his success than even in procuring esteem. It was an enterprise in which he succeeded with Miss Milner even beyond his most sanguine wish.

She had been educated at an English boarding-school, and had no idea of the superior and subordinate state of characters in a foreign seminary: besides, as a woman, she was privileged to say any thing she pleased; and as a beautiful woman, she had a right to expect that whatever she pleased to say should be admired.

Sandford knew the hearts of women, as well as those of men, though he had passed but little of his time in their society. He saw Miss Milner's heart at the first sight of her person; and beholding in that small circumference a weight of folly that he

wished to eradicate, he began to toil in the vineyard, eagerly courting her destination of him in the hope he could also make her abominate herself. In the mortifications of slight he was expert; and being a man of talents, whom all companies, especially those of her friends, respected, he did not begin by wasting that reverence he so highly valued upon ineffectual remonstrances, of which he could foresee the reception, but wakened her attention by his neglect of her. He spoke of her in her presence as of an indifferent person; sometimes forgetting even to name her when the subject required it; then would ask her pardon, and say that he "really did not recollect her," with such seeming sorrow for his fault, that she could not suppose the offence intended and of course felt the affront more acutely.

While, with every other person she was the principle, the cause, upon whom a whole party depended for conversation, cards, music, or dancing, with Mr. Sandford she found that she was of no importance. Sometimes she tried to consider this disregard of her as merely the effect of ill-breeding; but he was not an ill-bred man: he was a gentleman by birth, and one who had kept the best company—a man of sense and learning. "And such a man slights me without knowing it," she said; for she had not dived so deeply into the powers of simulation, as to suspect that such careless manners were the result of art.

This behaviour of Mr. Sandford had its desired effect: it humbled her in her own opinion more than a thousand sermons would have done, preached on the vanity of youth and beauty. She felt an inward shame at the insignificance of these qualities that she never knew before; and would have been cured of all her pride, had she not possessed a degree of spirit beyond the generality of her sex; such a degree as even Mr. Sandford, with all his penetration, did not expect to find. She determined to resent his treatment; and, entering the lists as his declared enemy, give to the world a reason why he did not acknowledge her sovereignty, as well as the rest of her devoted subjects.

She now commenced hostilities against all his arguments, his learning, and his favourite axioms; and by a happy talent of ridicule, in want of other weapons for this warfare, she threw in the way of the holy father as great trials of his patience as any that his order could have substituted in penance. Many things he bore like a martyr—at others, his fortitude would forsake

him, and he would call on her guardian, his former pupil, to interpose with his authority; she would then declare that she only had acted thus "to try the good man's temper, and that if he had combated with his fretfulness a few moments longer, she would have acknowledged his claim to canonisation; but that, having yielded to the sallies of his anger, he must now go through numerous other probations."

If Miss Fenton was admired by Dorriforth, by Sandford she was adored; and, instead of placing her as an example to Miss Milner, he spoke of her as of one endowed beyond Miss Milner's power of imitation. Often, with a shake of his head and a sigh, would he say,—

"No; I am not so hard upon you as your guardian: I only desire you to love Miss Fenton; to resemble her, I believe, is above your ability."

This was too much to bear composedly; and poor Miss Woodley, who was generally a witness of these controversies, felt a degree of sorrow at every sentence which, like the foregoing, chagrined and distressed her friend. Yet as she suffered, too, for Mr. Sandford, the joy of her friend's reply was mostly abated by the uneasiness it gave to *him*. But Mrs. Horton felt for none but the right reverend priest; and often did she feel so violently interested in his cause, that she could not refrain giving an answer herself in his behalf—thus doing the duty of an adversary with all the zeal of an advocate.

CHAPTER X.

MR. SANDFORD, finding his friend Dorriforth frequently perplexed in the management of his ward, and he himself thinking her incorrigible, gave his counsel, that a suitable match should be immediately sought out for her, and the care of so dangerous a person given into other hands. Dorriforth acknowledged the propriety of this advice, but lamented the difficulty of pleasing his ward as to the quality of her lover; for she had refused, besides Sir Edward Ashton, many others of equal pre-

tensions.—“Depend upon it then,” cried Sandford, “that her affections are engaged; and it is proper that you should know to whom.” Dorriforth thought he did know, and mentioned Lord Frederick; but said that he had no farther authority for this supposition than what his observation had given him, for that every explanation both upon his and her side had been evaded. “Take her then,” cried Sandford, “into the country; and if Lord Frederick should not follow, there is an end of your suspicions.”—“I shall not easily prevail upon Miss Milner to leave town,” replied he, “while it is in the highest fashion.”—“You can but try,” returned Sandford; “and if you should not succeed now, at least fix the time you mean to go during the autumn, and be firm to your determination.”—“But in the autumn,” replied Dorriforth, “Lord Frederick will of course be in the country; and as his uncle’s estate is near our residence, he will not then so evidently follow her, as he would if I could induce her to go immediately.”

It was agreed the attempt should be made. Instead of receiving this abrupt proposal with uneasiness, Miss Milner, to the surprise of all present, immediately consented, and gave her guardian an opportunity of saying several of the kindest and politest things upon her ready compliance.

“A token of approbation from you, Mr. Dorriforth,” returned she, “I always considered with high estimation: but your commendations are now become infinitely superior in value by their scarcity; for I do not believe that since Miss Fenton and Mr. Sandford came to town I have received one testimony of your esteem.”

Had these words been uttered with pleasantry, they might have passed without observation; but at the conclusion of the period, resentment flew to Miss Milner’s face, and she darted a piercing look at Mr. Sandford, which more pointedly expressed that she was angry with him, than if she had spoken volumes in her usual strain of raillery. Dorriforth was confused; but the concern which she had so plainly evinced for his good opinion throughout all that she had been saying silenced any rebuke he might else have given her, for this unwarrantable charge against his friend. Mrs. Horton was shocked at the irreverent manner in which Mr. Sandford was treated; and Miss Woodley turned to him with a benevolent smile upon her face, hoping to set him an

example of the manner in which he should receive the reproach. Her good wishes did not succeed ; yet he was perfectly unruffled, and replied with coolness,—

“The air of the country has affected the lady already: but it is a comfortable thing,” continued he, “that in the variety of humours to which some women are exposed, they cannot be uniform even in deceit.”

“Deceit!” cried Miss Milner: “in what am I deceitful? Did I ever pretend that I had an esteem for you?”

“That would not have been deceit, madam, but merely good manners.”

“I never, Mr. Sandford, sacrificed truth to politeness.”

“Except when the country has been proposed, and you thought it politeness to appear satisfied.”

“And I *was* satisfied, till I recollected that you might probably be of the party. Then every grove was changed into a wilderness, every rivulet into a stagnated pool, and every singing bird into a croaking raven.”

“A very poetical description!” returned he, calmly. “But, Miss Milner, you need not have had any apprehensions of *my* company in the country; for I understand the seat to which your guardian means to go belongs to you; and you may depend upon it, madam, that I will never enter a house in which you are the mistress.”

“Nor any house, I am certain, Mr. Sandford, but in which you are yourself the master.”

“What do you mean, madam? (and for the first time he elevated his voice) am I the master here?”

“Your servants,” replied she, looking at the company, “will not tell you so; but I do.”

“You condescend, Mr. Sandford,” cried Mrs. Horton, “in talking so much to a young heedless woman; but I know you do it for her good.”

“Well, Miss Milner,” cried Dorriforth (and the most cutting thing he could say), “since I find my proposal of the country has put you out of humour, I shall mention it no more.”

With all that quantity of resentment, anger, or rage, which sometimes boiled in the veins of Miss Milner, she was yet never wanting in that respect towards her guardian which withheld her from ever uttering one angry sentence directed immediately

to him; and a severe word of his, instead of exasperating, was sure to subdue her. This was the case at present: his words wounded her to the heart, but she had not the asperity to reply to them as she thought they merited, and she burst into tears. Dorriforth, instead of being concerned, as he usually was at seeing her uneasy, appeared on the present occasion provoked. He thought her weeping was a new reproach to his friend Mr. Sandford, and that to suffer himself to be moved by it would be a tacit condemnation of his friend's conduct. She understood his thoughts, and getting the better of her tears, apologised for her weakness; adding,—

“She could never bear with indifference an unjust accusation.”

“To prove that mine was unjust, madam,” replied Dorriforth, “be prepared to quit London, without any marks of regret, within a few days.”

She bowed assent: the necessary preparations were agreed upon; and while with apparent satisfaction she adjusted the plan of her journey (like those who behave well, not so much to please themselves as to vex their enemies), she secretly triumphed in the mortification she hoped that Mr. Sandford would receive from her obedient behaviour.

The news of this intended journey was of course soon made public. There is a secret charm in being pitied, when the misfortune is but ideal; and Miss Milner found infinite gratification in being told, “that hers was a cruel case, and that it was unjust and barbarous to force so much beauty into concealment, while London was filled with her admirers, who, like her, would languish in consequence of her solitude.” These things, and a thousand such, a thousand times repeated, she still listened to with pleasure; yet preserved the constancy not to shrink from her resolution of submitting.

Those involuntary sighs, however, that Miss Woodley had long ago observed, became still more frequent; and a tear half starting in her eye was an additional subject of her friend's observation. Yet though Miss Milner at those times was softened into melancholy, she by no means appeared unhappy. Her friend was acquainted with love only by name; yet she was confirmed from these increased symptoms, in what she before only suspected, that *love* must be the foundation of her care.

"Her senses had been captivated by the person and accomplishments of Lord Frederick," said Miss Woodley to herself; "but her understanding compels her to see his faults, and reproaches her passion. And, oh!" cried she, "could her guardian and Mr. Sandford but know of this conflict, how much would they have to admire; how little to condemn!"

With such friendly thoughts, and with the purest intentions, Miss Woodley did not fail to give both gentlemen reason to believe a contention of this nature was the actual state of Miss Milner's mind. Dorriforth was affected at the description, and Sandford urged more than ever the necessity of leaving town. In a few days they departed: Mrs. Horton, Miss Woodley, Miss Milner, and Mr. Dorriforth, accompanied by Miss Fenton, whom Miss Milner, knowing it to be the wish of her guardian, invited, for three months before her marriage, to her country seat. Elmwood House, or rather Castle, the seat of Lord Elmwood, was only a few miles distant from this residence, and he was expected to pass great part of the summer there, with his tutor, Mr. Sandford.

In the neighbourhood was also (as it has been already said) an estate belonging to an uncle of Lord Frederick's, and most of the party suspected they should soon see him on a visit there. To that expectation they in great measure attributed Miss Milner's visible content.

CHAPTER XI.

WITH this party Miss Milner arrived at her country house; and for near six weeks all around was the picture of tranquillity. Her satisfaction was as evident as every other person's; and all severe admonition being at this time unnecessary, either to exhort her to her duty, or to warn her against her folly, she was even in perfect good humour with Miss Fenton, and added friendship to hospitality.

Mr. Sandford, who came with Lord Elmwood to the neigh-

bouring seat, about a week after the arrival of Miss Milner at hers, was so scrupulously exact in the observance of his word, "*never to enter a house of Miss Milner's*," that he would not even call upon his friend Dorriforth there: but in their walks, and at Lord Elmwood's, the two parties, residing at the two houses, would occasionally join, and of course Sandford and she at those times met; yet so distant was the reserve on either side, that not a single word upon any occasion was ever exchanged between them.

Miss Milner did not like Mr. Sandford; yet, as there was no cause of inveterate rancour, admiring him, too, as a man who meant well, and her being besides of a most forgiving temper, she frequently felt concerned that he did not speak to her, although it had been to find fault as usual: and one morning, as they were all, after a long ramble, drawing towards her house, where Lord Elmwood was invited to dine, she could not refrain from dropping a tear at seeing Sandford turn back and wish them a "Good day."

But though she had the generosity to forgive an affront, she had not the humility to make a concession; and she foresaw that nothing less than some very humble atonement on her part would prevail upon the haughty priest to be reconciled. Dorriforth saw her concern upon this last trifling occasion with a secret pleasure, and an admiration that she had never before excited. She once insinuated to him to be a mediator between them; but before any accommodation could take place, the peace and composure of their abode were disturbed by the arrival of Sir Edward Ashton at Lord Elmwood's, where it appeared as if he had been invited in order to pursue his matrimonial plan.

At a dinner given by Lord Elmwood, Sir Edward was announced as an unexpected visiter. Miss Milner did not suppose him such; and she turned pale when his name was uttered. Dorriforth fixed his eyes upon her with some tokens of compassion, while Sandford seemed to exult; and, by his repeated "welcomes" to the baronet, gave proofs how much he was rejoiced to see him. All the declining enmity of Miss Milner was renewed at this behaviour; and suspecting Sandford as the instigator of the visit, she could not overcome her displeasure, but gave way to it in a manner which she thought the most mortifi-

fyng. Sir Edward, in the course of conversation, enquired "What neighbours were in the country?" and she, with an appearance of high satisfaction, named Lord Frederick Lawnley as being hourly expected at his uncle's. The colour spread over Sir Edward's face—Dorriforth was confounded—and Mr. Sandford looked enraged.

"Did Lord Frederick tell *you* he should be down?" Sandford asked of Dorriforth.

To which he replied, "No."

"But I hope, Mr. Sandford, you will permit *me* to know?" said Miss Milner. For as she now meant to torment him by what she said, she no longer constrained herself to silence; and as he harboured the same kind intention towards her, he had no longer any objection to make a reply, and therefore answered,—

"No, madam, if it depended upon my permission you should *not* know."

"Not *any* thing, sir, I dare say. You would keep me in utter ignorance."

"I would."

"From a self-interested motive, Mr. Sandford—that I might have a greater respect for you."

Some of the company laughed—Mrs. Horton coughed—Miss Woodley blushed—Lord Elmwood sneered—Dorriforth frowned—and Miss Fenton looked just as she did before.

The conversation was changed as soon as possible; and early in the evening the party from Milner Lodge returned home.

Miss Milner had scarcely left her dressing-room, where she had been taking off some part of her dress, when Dorriforth's servant came to acquaint her that his master was alone in his study, and begged to speak with her. She felt herself tremble: she immediately experienced a consciousness that she had not acted properly at Lord Elmwood's; for she felt a presentiment that her guardian was going to upbraid her; and her heart whispered that he had never yet reproached her without a cause.

Miss Woodley just then entered her apartment, and she found herself so much a coward, as to propose that she should go with her, and aid her with a word or two occasionally in her excuse.

"What! you, my dear," returned Miss Woodley, "who not three hours ago had the courage to vindicate your own cause before a whole company, of whom many were your adversaries; do *you* want an advocate before your guardian alone, who has ever treated you with tenderness?"

"It is that very tenderness which frightens me; which intimidates, and strikes me dumb. Is it possible I can return impertinence to the language and manners which Mr. Dorriforth uses? And as I am debarred from that resource, what can I do but stand before him like a guilty creature, acknowledging my faults?"

She again entreated her friend to go with her; but on a positive refusal, from the impropriety of such an intrusion, she was obliged at length to go by herself.

How much does the difference of exterior circumstances influence not only the manners, but even the persons of some people! Miss Milner, in Lord Elmwood's drawing-room, surrounded by listeners, by admirers (for even her enemies could not look at her without admiration), animated with approbation and applause—and Miss Milner, with no giddy observer to give her actions a false eclat, destitute of all but her own understanding (which secretly condemns her), upon the point of receiving censure from her guardian and friend, are two different beings. Though still beautiful beyond description, she does not look even in person the same. In the last-mentioned situation, she was shorter in stature than in the former—she was paler—she was thinner—and a very different contour presided over her whole air, and all her features.

When she arrived at the door of the study, she opened it with a trepidation she could hardly account for, and entered to Dorriforth the altered woman she has been represented. His heart had taken the most decided part against her, and his face had assumed the most severe aspect of reproach; but her appearance gave an instantaneous change to his whole mind and countenance.

She halted, as if she feared to approach—he hesitated, as if he knew not how to speak. Instead of the anger with which he was prepared to begin, his voice involuntarily softened, and without knowing what he said, he began,—

"My dear Miss Milner——"

She expected he was angry, and in her confusion his gentleness was lost upon her. She imagined that what he said might be censure, and she continued to tremble, though he repeatedly assured her, that he meant only to advise, not to upbraid her.

"For as to all those little disputes between Mr. Sandford and you," said he, "I should be partial if I blamed *you* more than *him*. Indeed, when you take the liberty to condemn him, his character makes the freedom appear in a more serious light than when he complains of you; and yet, if he provokes your retorts, he alone must answer for them: nor will I undertake to decide betwixt you. But I have a question to ask you, and to which I require a serious and unequivocal answer: Do you expect Lord Frederick in the country?"

Without hesitation she replied, "I do."

"One more question I have to ask, madam, and to which I expect a reply equally unreserved: Is Lord Frederick the man you approve for your husband?"

Upon this close interrogation she discovered an embarrassment, beyond any she had ever yet betrayed, and faintly replied,—

"No, he is not."

"Your words tell me one thing," answered Dorriforth, "but your looks declare another: which am I to believe?"

"Which you please," was her answer, while she discovered an insulted dignity, that astonished, without convincing him.

"But then why encourage him to follow you hither, Miss Milner?"

"Why commit a thousand follies," she replied, in tears, "every hour of my life?"

"You then promote the hopes of Lord Frederick without one serious intention of completing them! This is a conduct against which it is my duty to guard you, and you shall no longer deceive either him or yourself. The moment he arrives, it is my resolution that you refuse to see him or consent to become his wife."

In answer to the alternative thus offered, she appeared averse to both propositions; and yet came to no explanation why; but left her guardian at the end of the conference as much at a loss to decide upon her true sentiments, as he was before he had thus seriously requested he might be informed of them; but

having steadfastly taken the resolution which he had just communicated, he found that resolution a certain relief to his mind.

CHAPTER XII.

SIR EDWARD ASHTON, though not invited by Miss Milner, yet frequently did himself the honour to visit her at her house; sometimes he accompanied Lord Elmwood, at other times he came to see Dorriforth alone, who generally introduced him to the ladies. But Sir Edward was either so unwilling to give pain to the object of his love, or so intimidated by her frowns, that he seldom addressed her with a single word, except the usual compliments at entering, and retiring. This apprehension of offending, without one hope of pleasing, had the most awkward effect upon the manners of the worthy baronet, and his endeavours to insinuate himself into the affections of the woman he loved, merely by not giving her offence either in speaking to her or looking at her, formed a character so whimsical, that it frequently forced a smile from Miss Milner, though his very name had often power to throw a gloom over her face: she looked upon him as the cause of her being hurried to the election of a lover, before her own mind could well direct her where to fix. Besides, his pursuit was troublesome, while it was no triumph to her vanity, which, by the addresses of Lord Frederick, was in the highest manner gratified.

His Lordship now arrives in the country, and calls one morning at Miss Milner's: her guardian sees his carriage coming up the avenue, and gives orders to the servants to say their lady is not at home, but that Mr. Dorriforth is: Lord Frederick leaves his compliments and goes away.

The ladies all observed his carriage and servants. Miss Milner flew to her glass, adjusted her dress; and in her looks expressed every sign of palpitation—but in vain she keeps her eye fixed upon the door of the apartment: no Lord Frederick appears.

After some minutes of expectation the door opens, and her guardian comes in. She was disappointed: he perceived that she was, and he looked at her with a most serious face. She immediately called to mind the assurance he had given her, "that her acquaintance with Lord Frederick in its then improper state should not continue;" and between chagrin and confusion, she was at a loss how to behave.

Though the ladies were all present, Dorriforth said, without the smallest reserve, "Perhaps, Miss Milner, you may think I have taken an unwarrantable liberty, in giving orders to your servants to deny you to Lord Frederick: but until his Lordship and I have had a private conference, or you condescend to declare your sentiments more fully in regard to his visits, I think it my duty to put an end to them."

"You will always perform your duty, Mr. Dorriforth, I have no doubt, whether I concur or not."

"Yet believe me, madam, I should perform it more cheerfully, if I could hope that it was sanctioned by your inclinations."

"I am not mistress of my inclinations, sir, or they should conform to yours."

"Place them under my direction, and I will answer for it they will."

A servant came in:—"Lord Frederick is returned, sir, and says he should be glad to see you."—"Show him into the study," cried Dorriforth hastily, and, rising from his chair, left the room.

"I hope they won't quarrel," said Mrs. Horton, meaning that she thought they would.

"I am sorry to see you so uneasy, Miss Milner," said Miss Fenton, with perfect unconcern.

As the badness of the weather had prevented their usual morning's exercise, the ladies were employed at their needles till the dinner bell called them away. "Do you think Lord Frederick is gone?" then whispered Miss Milner to Miss Woodley.—"I think not," she replied.—"Go ask of the servants, dear creature"—and Miss Woodley went out of the room. She soon returned, and said, apart, "He is now getting into his chariot: I saw him pass in violent haste through the hall: he seemed to fly."

"Ladies, the dinner is waiting," cried Mrs. Horton; and they repaired to the dining room, where Dorriforth soon after came, and engrossed their whole attention by his disturbed looks, and unusual silence. Before dinner was over, he was, however, more himself; but still he appeared thoughtful and dissatisfied. At the time of their evening walk, he excused himself from accompanying them, and they saw him in a distant field with Mr. Sandford in earnest conversation; for Sandford and he stopped on one spot for a quarter of an hour, as if the interest of the subject had so engaged them, they stood still without knowing it. Lord Elmwood, who had joined the ladies, walked home with them. Dorriforth entered soon after, in a much less gloomy humour than when he went out, and told his relation, that he and the ladies would dine with him the next day, if he was disengaged; and it was agreed they should.

Still Dorriforth was in some perturbation, but the immediate cause was concealed till the day following, when, about an hour before the company's departure from Elmwood Castle, Miss Milner and Miss Woodley were desired, by a servant, to walk into a separate apartment, in which they found Mr. Dorriforth, with Mr. Sandford, waiting for them. Her guardian made an apology to Miss Milner for the form, the ceremony, of which he was going to make use; but he trusted the extreme weight which oppressed his mind, lest he should mistake the real sentiments of a person whose happiness depended upon his correct knowledge of them, would plead his excuse.

"I know, Miss Milner," continued he, "the world in general allows to unmarried women great latitude in disguising their minds with respect to the man they love. I, too, am willing to pardon any little dissimulation that is but consistent with a modesty that becomes every woman upon the subject of marriage. But here, to what point I may limit, or you may extend, this kind of venial deceit may so widely differ that it is not impossible for me to remain unacquainted with your sentiments, even after you have revealed them to me. Under this consideration, I wish once more to hear your thoughts in regard to matrimony, and to hear them before one of your own sex, that I may form an opinion by her constructions."

To all this serious oration, Miss Milner made no other reply

than by turning to Mr. Sandford, and asking, "if he was the person of her own sex to whose judgment her guardian was to submit his own?"

"Madam," cried Sandford, angrily, "you are come hither upon serious business."

"Any business must be serious to me, Mr. Sandford, in which you are concerned; and if you had called it *sorrowful*, the epithet would have suited as well."

"Miss Milner," said her guardian, "I did not bring you here to contend with Mr. Sandford."

"Then why, sir, bring him hither? for where he and I are there must be contention."

"I brought him hither, madam, or I should rather say, brought you to this house, merely that he might be present on this occasion, and with his discernment relieve me from a suspicion that my own judgment is neither able to suppress nor to confirm."

"Are there any more witnesses you may wish to call in, sir, to remove your doubts of my veracity? If there are, pray send for them before you begin your interrogations."

He shook his head.—She continued,—

"The whole world is welcome to hear what I say, and every different person is welcome to judge me differently."

"Dear Miss Milner!" cried Miss Woodley, with a tone of reproach for the vehemence with which she had spoken.

"Perhaps, Miss Milner," said Dorriforth, "you will not now reply to those questions I was going to put?"

"Did I ever refuse, sir," returned she, with a self-approving air, "to comply with any request that you have seriously made? Have I ever refused obedience to your commands whenever you thought proper to lay them upon me? If not, you have no right to suppose that I will do so now."

He was going to reply, when Mr. Sandford sullenly interrupted him, and walking towards the door, cried, "When you come to the point for which you brought me here, send for me again."

"Stay now," said Dorriforth.—"And Miss Milner," continued he, "I not only entreat, but conjure you to tell me—have you given your word or your affections to Lord Frederick Lawnley?"

The colour spread over her face, and she replied, "I thought confessions were always to be made in secret: however, as I am not a member of your church, I submit to the persecution of a heretic, and I answer—Lord Frederick has neither my word nor any share in my affections."

Sandford, Dorriforth, and Miss Woodley looked at each other with a degree of surprise that for some time kept them silent. At length Dorriforth said, "And it is your firm intention never to become his wife?"

To which she answered, "At present it is."

"At present! Do you suspect you shall change your mind?"

"Women sometimes do."

"But before that change can take place, your acquaintance will be at an end: for it is that which I shall next insist upon, and to which you can have no objection."

She replied, "I had rather it should continue."

"On what account?" cried Dorriforth.

"Because it entertains me."

"For shame, for shame!" returned he: "it endangers your character and your happiness. Yet again, do not suffer me to interfere, if the breaking with my Lord Frederick can militate against your felicity."

"By no means," she answered: "Lord Frederick makes part of my amusement, but can never constitute my felicity."

"Miss Woodley," said Dorriforth, "do you comprehend your friend in the same literal and unequivocal sense that I do?"

"Certainly I do, sir."

"And pray, Miss Woodley," said he, "were those the sentiments which you have always entertained?"

Miss Woodley hesitated. He continued—"Or has this conversation altered them?"

She hesitated again, then answered, "This conversation has altered them."

"And yet you confide in it!" cried Sandford, looking at her with contempt.

"Certainly I do," replied Miss Woodley.

"Do not you, then, Mr. Sandford?" asked Dorriforth.

"I would advise you to act as if I did," replied Sandford.

"Then, Miss Milner," said Dorriforth, "you see Lord Fre-

derick no more; and I hope I have your permission to apprise him of this arrangement."

"You have, sir," she replied, with a completely unembarrassed countenance and voice.

Her friend looked at her as if to discover some lurking wish, adverse to all these protestations, but she could not discern one. Sandford, too, fixed his penetrating eyes upon her, as if he would look through her soul; but finding it perfectly composed, he cried out,—

"Why, then, not write his dismissal herself, and save you, Mr. Dorriforth, the trouble of any farther contest with him?"

"Indeed, Miss Milner," said Dorriforth, "that would oblige me; for it is with great reluctance that I meet him upon this subject: he was extremely impatient and importunate when he was last with me: he took advantage of my ecclesiastical situation to treat me with a levity and ill breeding, that I could ill have suffered upon any other consideration than a compliance with my duty."

"Dictate what you please, Mr. Dorriforth, and I will write it," said she, with a warmth like the most unaffected inclination. "And while you, sir," she continued, "are so indulgent as not to distress me with the importunities of any gentleman to whom I am averse, I think myself equally bound to rid you of the impertinence of every one to whom you may have objection."

"But," answered he, "rest assured I have no material objection to my Lord Frederick, except from that dilemma in which your acquaintance with him has involved us all; and I should conceive the same against any other man, where the same circumstance occurred. As you have now, however, freely and politely consented to the manner in which it has been proposed that you shall break with him, I will not trouble you a moment longer upon a subject on which I have so frequently explained my wishes; but conclude it by assuring you, that your ready acquiescence has given me the sincerest satisfaction."

"I hope, Mr. Sandford," said she, turning to him with a smile, "I have given you satisfaction likewise?"

Sandford could not say yes, and was ashamed to say no: he, therefore, made answer only by his looks, which were full of suspicion. She, notwithstanding, made him a very low courtesy. Her guardian then handed her out of the apartment into her

coach, which was waiting to take her, Miss Woodley, and himself home.

CHAPTER XIII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the seeming readiness with which Miss Milner had resigned all farther acquaintance with Lord Frederick, during the short ride home she appeared to have lost great part of her wonted spirits: she was thoughtful, and once sighed heavily. Dorriforth began to fear that she had not only made a sacrifice of her affections, but of her veracity; yet why she had done so he could not comprehend.

As the carriage moved slowly through a lane between Elmwood Castle and her own house, on casting her eyes out of the window, Miss Milner's countenance was brightened in an instant; and that instant Lord Frederick, on horseback, was at the coach door, and the coachman stopped.

"Oh, Miss Milner," cried he, with a voice and manner that could give little suspicion of the truth of what he said, "I am overjoyed at the happiness of seeing you, even though it is but an accidental meeting."

She was evidently glad to see *him*: but the earnestness with which he spoke seemed to put her upon her guard not to express the like satisfaction; and she said, in a cool constrained manner, she "was glad to see his Lordship."

The reserve with which she spoke gave Lord Frederick immediate suspicion who was in the coach with her, and turning his head quickly, he met the stern eye of Dorriforth; upon which, without the smallest salutation, he turned from him again abruptly and rudely. Miss Milner was confused, and Miss Woodley in torture, at this palpable affront, to which Dorriforth alone appeared indifferent.

"Go on," said Miss Milner to the footman, "desire the coachman to drive on."

"No," cried Lord Frederick, "not till you have told me when I shall see you again."

"I will write you word, my Lord," replied she, something alarmed. "You shall have a letter immediately after I get home."

As if he guessed what its contents were to be, he cried out with warmth, "Take care, then, madam, how you treat me in that letter. And you, Mr. Dorriforth," turning to him, "do you take care what it contains; for if it be dictated by you, to you I shall send the answer."

Dorriforth, without making any reply, or casting a look at him, put his head out of the window on the opposite side, and called, in a very angry tone, to the coachman, "How dare you not drive on, when your lady orders you?"

The sound of Dorriforth's voice in anger was to the servant so unusual, that it acted like electricity upon the man; and he drove away at the instant with such rapidity, that Lord Frederick was in a moment many yards behind. As soon, however, as he recovered from the surprise into which this sudden command had thrown him, he rode with speed after the carriage, and followed it, till it arrived at the door of Miss Milner's house; there, giving himself up to the rage of love, or to the rage against Dorriforth for the contempt he had shown to him, he leaped from his horse when Miss Milner stepped from her carriage, and seizing her hand, entreated her "not to desert him, in compliance with the injunctions of monkish hypocrisy."

Dorriforth heard this, standing silently by, with a manly scorn upon his countenance.

Miss Milner struggled to loose her hand, saying,—

"Excuse me from replying to you now, my Lord."

In return, he lifted her hand eagerly to his lips, and began to devour it with kisses; when Dorriforth, with an instantaneous impulse, rushed forward, and struck him a violent blow in the face. Under the force of this assault, and the astonishment it excited, Lord Frederick staggered, and, letting fall the hand of Miss Milner, her guardian immediately laid hold of it, and led her into the house.

She was terrified beyond description; and with extreme difficulty Mr. Dorriforth conveyed her to her chamber, without taking her in his arms. When, by the assistance of her maid, he

had placed her upon a sofa, overwhelmed with shame and confusion for what he had done, he fell upon his knees before her, and "implored her forgiveness for the indelicacy he had been guilty of in her presence." And that he had alarmed her, and had forgotten the respect which he thought sacredly her due, seemed the only circumstance which then dwelt upon his thoughts.

She felt the indecorum of the posture he had condescended to take, and was shocked: To see her guardian at her feet, struck her with a sense of impropriety, as if she had seen a parent there. With agitation and emotion, she conjured him to rise; and, with a thousand protestations, declared "that she thought the rashness of the action was the highest proof of his regard for her."

Miss Woodley now entered: her care being ever employed upon the unfortunate, Lord Frederick had just been the object of it: she had waited by his side, and, with every good purpose, had preached patience to him, while he was smarting under the pain, but more under the shame, of his chastisement. At first, his fury threatened a retort upon the servants around him (and who refused his entrance into the house) of the punishment he had received. But, in the certainty of an *amende honorable*, which must hereafter be made, he overcame the many temptations which the moment offered; and remounting his horse, rode away from the scene of his disgrace.

No sooner had Miss Woodley entered the room, and Dorriforth had resigned to her the care of his ward, than he flew to the spot where he had left Lord Frederick, negligent of what might be the event if he still remained there. After enquiring, and being told that he was gone, Dorriforth retired to his own apartment—with a bosom torn by more excruciating sensations than those which he had given to his adversary.

The reflection which struck him first with remorse, as he shut the door of his chamber, was,—“I have departed from my character—from the sacred character, the dignity of my profession and sentiments—I have departed from myself.—I am no longer the philosopher, but the ruffian—I have treated with an unpardonable insult a young nobleman, whose only offence was love, and a fond desire to insinuate himself into the favour of his mistress. I must atone for this outrage in whatever manner he may

choose; and the law of honour and of justice (though in this one instance contrary to the law of religion) enjoins, that if he demands my life in satisfaction for his wounded feelings, it is his due. Alas! that I could but have laid it down this morning, unsullied with a cause for which it will make inadequate atonement!"

His next reproach was,—“I have offended, and filled with horror, a beautiful young woman, whom it was my duty to have protected from those brutal manners, to which I myself have exposed her.”

Again,—“I have drawn upon myself the just upbraidings of my faithful preceptor and friend; of the man in whose judgment it was my delight to be approved: above all, I have drawn upon myself the stings of conscience.”

“Where shall I pass this sleepless night?” cried he, walking repeatedly across his chamber. “Can I go to the ladies? I am unworthy of their society. Shall I go and repose my disturbed mind on Sandford? I am ashamed to tell him the cause of my uneasiness. Shall I go to Lord Frederick, and humbling myself before him, beg his forgiveness? He would spurn me for a coward. No”—and he lifted up his eyes to Heaven,—“Thou all-great, all-wise, and omnipotent Being, Thou whom I have most offended, it is to Thee alone that I have recourse in this hour of tribulation, and from Thee alone I solicit comfort. The confidence with which I now address myself to Thee, encouraged by that long intercourse which religion has effected, I here acknowledge to repay me amply in this one moment, for the many years of my past life, devoted with my best, though imperfect, efforts to thy service.”

CHAPTER XIV.

ALTHOUGH Miss Milner had not foreseen any fatal event resulting from the indignity offered to Lord Frederick, yet she passed a night very different from those to which she had been accustomed.

No sooner was she falling into a sleep, than a thousand vague, but distressing, ideas darted across her imagination. Her heart would sometimes whisper to her when she was half asleep, "Lord Frederick is banished from you for ever." She shakes off the uneasiness this consideration brings along with it: she then starts, and sees the blow still aimed at him by Dorriforth. No sooner has she driven away this painful image, than she is again awakened by beholding her guardian at her feet suing for pardon. She sighs, she trembles, and is chilled with terror.

Relieved by tears, towards the morning she sinks into a slumber, but waking, finds the same images crowding all together upon her mind: she is doubtful to which to give the preference. One, however, rushes the foremost and continues so. She knows not the fatal consequence of ruminating, nor why she dwells upon that, more than upon all the rest, but it will give place to none.

She rises languid and disordered, and at breakfast adds fresh pain to Dorriforth by her altered appearance.

He had scarcely left the room, when an officer waited upon him with a challenge from Lord Frederick. To the message delivered by this gentleman, he replied,—

"Sir, as a clergyman, most especially of the Church of Rome, I know not whether I am not exempt from answering a demand of this kind; but not having had forbearance to avoid an offence, I will not claim an exemption, that would only indemnify me from making reparation."

"You will then, sir, meet Lord Frederick at the appointed hour?" said the officer.

"I will, sir; and my immediate care shall be to find a gentleman who will accompany me."

The officer withdrew, and when Dorriforth was again alone, he was going once more to reflect; but he durst not. Since yesterday, reflection, for the first time, was become painful to him; and even as he rode the short way to Lord Elmwood's immediately after, he found his own thoughts were so insufferable, that he was obliged to enter into conversation with his servant. Solitude, that formerly charmed him, would, at those moments, have been worse than death.

At Lord Elmwood's, he met Sandford in the hall; and the sight of him was no longer welcome: he knew how different the

principles which he had just adopted were to those of that reverend friend, and without Sandford's complaining, or even suspecting, what had happened, his presence was a sufficient reproach. He passed him as hastily as he could, and enquiring for Lord Elmwood, disclosed to him his errand. It was to ask him to be his second. The young Earl started, and wished to consult his tutor; but that his kinsman strictly forbade; and having urged his reasons with arguments which at least the Earl could not refute, he was at length prevailed upon to promise that he would accompany him to the field, which was at the distance only of a few miles, and the parties were to be there at seven on the same evening.

As soon as his business with Lord Elmwood was settled, Dorriforth returned home, to make preparations for the event which might ensue from this meeting. He wrote letters to several of his friends, and one to his ward; in writing which, he could with difficulty preserve the usual firmness of his mind.

Sandford, going into Lord Elmwood's library soon after his relation had left him, expressed his surprise at finding he was gone; upon which that nobleman, having answered a few questions, and given a few significant hints that he was intrusted with a secret, frankly confessed what he had promised to conceal.

Sandford, as much as a holy man could be, was enraged at Dorriforth for the cause of the challenge, but was still more enraged at his wickedness in accepting it. He applauded his pupil's virtue in making the discovery, and congratulated himself that he should be the instrument of saving not only his friend's life, but of preventing the scandal of his being engaged in a duel.

In the ardour of his designs, he went immediately to Miss Milner's—entered that house which he had so long refused to enter, and at a time when he was upon aggravated bad terms with its owner.

He asked for Dorriforth, went hastily into his apartment, and poured upon him a torrent of rebukes. Dorriforth bore all he said with the patience of a devotee, but the firmness of a man. He owned his fault; but no eloquence could make him recall the promise he had given to repair the injury. Unshaken by the arguments, persuasions, and menaces of Sandford, he gave an additional proof of that inflexibility for which he had been long

distinguished ; and, after a dispute of two hours, they parted, neither of them the better for what either had advanced, but **Dorriforth** something the worse : his conscience gave testimony to **Sandford's** opinion, "that he was bound by ties more sacred than worldly honour." But while he owned, he would not yield to the duty.

Sandford left him, determined, however, that **Lord Elmwood** should not be accessory in his guilt, and this he declared ; upon which **Dorriforth** took the resolution of seeking another second.

In passing through the house on his return home, **Sandford** met, by accident, **Mrs. Horton**, **Miss Milner**, and the other two ladies, returning from a saunter in the garden. Surprised at the sight of **Mr. Sandford** in her house, **Miss Milner** would not express that surprise ; but going up to him with all that friendly benevolence which in general played about her heart, she took hold of one of his hands, and pressed it with a kindness which told him more forcibly that he was welcome, than if she had made the most elaborate speech to convince him of it. He, however, seemed a little touched with her behaviour ; and, as an excuse for breaking his word, cried,—

"I beg your pardon, madam ; but I was brought hither in my anxiety to prevent murder."

"Murder!" exclaimed all the ladies.

"Yes," answered he, addressing himself to **Miss Fenton**, "your betrothed husband is a party concerned : he is going to be second to **Mr. Dorriforth**, who means this very evening to be killed by **Lord Frederick**, or to kill him, in addition to the blow that he gave him last night."

Mrs. Horton exclaimed, "If **Mr. Dorriforth** dies, he dies a martyr."

Miss Woodley cried, with fervour, "Heaven forbid!"

Miss Fenton cried, "Dear me!"

While **Miss Milner**, without uttering one word, sunk speechless on the floor.

They lifted her up, and brought her to the door which entered into the garden. She soon recovered ; for the tumult of her mind would not suffer her to remain inactive, and she was roused, in spite of her weakness, to endeavour to ward off the impending disaster. In vain, however, she attempted to walk

to her guardian's apartment: she sunk as before, and was taken to a settee, while Miss Woodley was despatched to bring him to her.

Informed of the cause of her indisposition, he followed Miss Woodley with a tender anxiety for her health, and with grief and confusion that he had so carelessly endangered it. On his entering the room, Sandford beheld the inquietude of his mind, and cried, "Here is your *guardian*," with a cruel emphasis on the word.

He was too much engaged with the sufferings of his ward to reply to Sandford. He placed himself on the settee by her, and with the utmost tenderness, reverence, and pity, entreated her not to be concerned at an accident in which he, and he alone, had been to blame; but which he had no doubt would be accommodated in the most amicable manner.

"I have one favour to require of you, Mr. Dorriforth," said she, "and that is, your promise, your solemn promise, which I know is ever sacred, that you will not meet my Lord Frederick."

He hesitated.

"Oh, madam," cried Sandford, "he is grown a libertine now; and I would not believe his word, if he were to give it you."

"Then, Sir," returned Dorriforth, angrily, "you *may* believe my word, for I will keep that which I gave to *you*. I will give Lord Frederick all the restitution in my power. But, my dear Miss Milner, let not this alarm you: we may not find it convenient to meet this many a day; and, most probably, some fortunate explanation may prevent our meeting at all. If not, reckon but among the many duels that are fought, how few are fatal; and even in that case, how small would be the loss to society, if——." He was proceeding.

"I should ever deplore the loss!" cried Miss Milner: "on such an occasion, I could not survive the death of either."

"For my part," he replied, "I look upon my life as much forfeited to my Lord Frederick, to whom I have given a high offence, as it might in other instances have been forfeited to the offended laws of the land. Honour is the law of the polite part of the land: we know it; and when we transgress against it knowingly we justly incur our punishment. However, Miss Milner, this affair will not be settled immediately; and I have no

doubt, but that all will be as you could wish. Do you think I should appear thus easy," added he, with a smile, "if I were going to be shot at by my Lord Frederick?"

"Very well!" cried Sandford, with a look that evinced he was better informed.

"You will stay within, then, all this day?" said Miss Milner.

"I am engaged to dinner," he replied: "it is unlucky;—I am sorry for it—but I'll be at home early in the evening."

"Stained with human blood," cried Sandford, "or yourself a corpse!"

The ladies lifted up their hands. Miss Milner rose from her seat, and threw herself at her guardian's feet.

"You kneeled to me last night: I now kneel to you," she cried; "kneel, never desiring to rise again, if you persist in your intention. I am weak, I am volatile, I am indiscreet; but I have a heart from which some impressions can never—oh! never,—be erased."

He endeavoured to raise her: she persisted to kneel—and here the affright, the terror, the anguish she endured, discovered to her her own sentiments, which, till that moment, she had doubted,—and she continued,—

"I no longer pretend to conceal my passion—I love Lord Frederick Lawnley."

Her guardian started.

"Yes, to my shame, I love him," cried she, all emotion: "I meant to have struggled with the weakness, because I supposed it would be displeasing to you; but apprehension for his safety has taken away every power of restraint, and I beseech you to spare his life."

"This is exactly what I thought," cried Sandford, with an air of triumph.

"Good Heaven!" cried Miss Woodley.

"But it is very natural," said Mrs. Horton.

"I own," said Dorriforth (struck with amaze, and now taking her from his feet with a force that she could not resist),—"I own, Miss Milner, I am greatly affected and wounded at this contradiction in your character."

"But did not I say so?" cried Sandford, interrupting him.

"However," continued he, "you may take my word, though

you have deceived me in yours, that Lord Frederick's life is secure. For your sake, I would not endanger it for the universe. But let this be a warning to you——”

He was proceeding with the most austere looks, and pointed language, when observing the shame and the self-reproach that agitated her mind, he divested himself in great measure of his resentment, and said, mildly,—

“Let this be a warning to you, how you deal in future with the friends who wish you well. You have hurried me into a mistake that might have cost me my life, or the life of the man you love; and thus exposed *you* to misery more bitter than death.”

“I am not worthy of your friendship, Mr. Dorriforth,” said she, sobbing with grief; “and from this moment forsake me.”

“No, madam, not in the moment you first discover to me how I can make you happy.”

The conversation appearing now to become of a nature in which the rest of the company could have no share whatever, they were all, except Mr. Sandford, retiring; when Miss Milner called Miss Woodley back, saying, “Stay you with me: I was never so unfit to be left without your friendship.”

“Perhaps at present you can dispense with mine?” said Dorriforth. She made no answer. He then once more assured her Lord Frederick's life was safe, and was quitting the room: but when he recollected in what humiliation he had left her, turning towards her as he opened the door, he added,—

“And be assured, madam, that my esteem for you shall be the same as ever.”

Sandford, as he followed him, bowed, and repeated the same words, “And, Madam, be assured that *my* esteem for you shall be *the same as ever*.”

CHAPTER XV.

THIS taunting reproof from Sandford made little impression upon Miss Milner, whose thoughts were all fixed on a subject of much more importance than the opinion which he entertained of her. She threw her arms about her friend the moment they were left alone, and asked, with anxiety, "what she thought of her behaviour?" Miss Woodley, who could not approve of the duplicity she had betrayed, still wished to reconcile her as much as possible to her own conduct, and replied, she "highly commended the frankness with which she had, at last, acknowledged her sentiments."

"Frankness!" cried Miss Milner, starting. "Frankness, my dear Miss Woodley! What you have just now heard me say is all a falsehood."

"How, Miss Milner?"

"Oh, Miss Woodley," returned she, sobbing upon her bosom, "pity the agonies of my heart, my heart by nature sincere, when such are the fatal propensities it cherishes, that I must submit to the grossest falsehoods rather than reveal the truth."

"What can you mean?" cried Miss Woodley, with the strongest amazement in her face.

"Do you suppose I love Lord Frederick? Do you suppose I *can* love him?—Oh fly, and prevent my guardian from telling him such an untruth."

"What can you mean?" repeated Miss Woodley; "I protest you terrify me." For this inconsistency in the behaviour of Miss Milner appeared as if her senses had been deranged.

"Fly," she resumed, "and prevent the inevitable ill consequence which will ensue, if Lord Frederick should be told this falsehood. It will involve us all in greater disquiet than we suffer at present."

"Then what has influenced you, my dear Miss Milner?"

"That which impels all my actions—an unsurmountable instinct; a fatality that will for ever render me the most miserable of human beings, and yet you, even you, my dear Miss Woodley, will not pity me."

Miss Woodley pressed her closely in her arms, and vowed, "that while she was unhappy, from whatever cause, she still would pity her."

"Go to Mr. Dorriforth, then, and prevent him from imposing upon Lord Frederick."

"But that imposition is the only means of preventing the duel," replied Miss Woodley. "The moment I have told him that your affection was but counterfeited, he will no longer refuse accepting the challenge."

"Then, at all events, I am undone," exclaimed Miss Milner; "for the duel is horrible, even beyond every thing else."

"How so?" returned Miss Woodley, "since you have declared that you do not care for my Lord Frederick?"

"But are you so blind," returned Miss Milner, with a degree of madness in her looks, "as to believe I do not care for Mr. Dorriforth? Oh, Miss Woodley, I love him with all the passion of a mistress, and with all the tenderness of a wife."

Miss Woodley at this sentence sat down; it was on a chair that was close to her—her feet could not have taken her to any other. She trembled—she was white as ashes, and deprived of speech. Miss Milner, taking her by the hand, said,—

"I know what you feel—I know what you think of me—and how much you hate and despise me. But Heaven is witness to all my struggles—nor would I, even to myself, acknowledge the shameless prepossession, till forced by a sense of his danger——"

"Silence!" cried Miss Woodley, struck with horror.

"And even now," resumed Miss Milner, "have I not concealed it from all but you, by plunging myself into a new difficulty, from which I know not how I shall be extricated? And do I entertain a hope? No, Miss Woodley, nor ever will. But suffer me to own my folly to you, to entreat your soothing friendship to free me from my weakness. And, oh! give me your advice to deliver me from the difficulties which surround me."

Miss Woodley was still pale and silent.

Education is called second nature. In the strict (but not enlarged) education of Miss Woodley, it was more powerful than the first; and the violation of oaths, persons, or things consecrated to Heaven, was, in her opinion, if not the most enormous, yet among the most terrific in the catalogue of crimes.

Miss Milner had lived so long in a family who had imbibed these opinions, that she was convicted of their existence: nay, her own reason told her that solemn vows of every kind ought to be sacred; and the more she respected her guardian's understanding, the less did she call in question his religious tenets: in esteeming him, she esteemed all his notions; and among the rest, venerated those of his religion. Yet that passion, which had unhappily taken possession of her whole soul, would not have been inspired, had not there subsisted an early difference in their systems of divine faith. Had she been early taught what were the sacred functions of a Roman ecclesiastic, though all her esteem, all her admiration, had been attracted by the qualities and accomplishments of her guardian, yet education would have given such a prohibition to her love, that she would have been precluded from it, as by that barrier which divides a sister from a brother.

This, unfortunately, was not the case; and Miss Milner loved Dorriforth without one conscious check to tell her she was wrong, except that which convinced her, her love would be avoided by him with detestation and with horror.

Miss Woodley, something recovered from her first surprise and sufferings—for never did her susceptible mind suffer so exquisitely—amidst all her grief and abhorrence, felt that pity was still predominant; and reconciled to the faults of Miss Milner by her misery, she once more looked at her with friendship, and asked, "what she could do to render her less unhappy?"

"Make me forget," replied Miss Milner, "every moment of my life since I first saw you. That moment was teeming with a weight of cares, under which I must labour till my death."

"And even in death," replied Miss Woodley, "do not hope to shake them off. If unrepented in this world——"

She was proceeding—but the anxiety her friend endured would not suffer her to be free from the apprehension, that notwithstanding the positive assurance of her guardian, if he and

Lord Frederick should meet, the duel might still take place; she therefore rang the bell and enquired if Mr. Dorriforth was still at home? The answer was "he had rode out."—"You remember," said Miss Woodley, "he told you he should dine from home." This did not, however, dismiss her fears, and she despatched two servants different ways in pursuit of him, acquainting them with her suspicions, and charging them to prevent the duel. Sandford had also taken his precautions; but though he knew the time, he did not know the exact place of their appointment, for that Lord Elmwood had forgot to enquire.

The excessive alarm which Miss Milner discovered upon this occasion was imputed by the servants, and by others who were witnesses of it, to her affection for Lord Frederick; while none but Miss Woodley knew, or had the most distant suspicion of, the real cause.

Mrs. Horton and Miss Fenton, who were sitting together expatiating on the duplicity of their own sex in the instance just before them, had, notwithstanding the interest of the discourse, a longing desire to break it off; for they were impatient to see this poor frail being whom they were loading with their censure. They longed to see if she would have the confidence to look them in the face; them, to whom she had so often protested, that she had not the smallest attachment to Lord Frederick, but from motives of vanity.

These ladies heard with infinite satisfaction that dinner had been served, but met Miss Milner at the table with less degree of pleasure than they had expected; for her mind was so totally abstracted from any consideration of them, that they could not discern a single blush, or confused glance, which their presence occasioned. No, she had before *them* divulged nothing of which she was ashamed: she was only ashamed that what she had said was not true. In the bosom of Miss Woodley alone was that secret entrusted which could call a blush into her face; and before her, she *did* feel confusion: before the gentle friend, to whom she had till this time communicated all her faults without embarrassment, she now cast down her eyes in shame.

Soon after the dinner was removed, Lord Elmwood entered; and that gallant young nobleman declared—"Mr. Sandford had used him ill, in not permitting him to accompany his rela-

tion; for he feared that Mr. Dorriforth would now throw himself upon the sword of Lord Frederick, without a single friend near to defend him." A rebuke from the eye of Miss Woodley, which, from this day, had a command over Miss Milner, restrained her from expressing the affright she suffered from this intimation. Miss Fenton replied, "As to that, my Lord, I see no reason why Mr. Dorriforth and Lord Frederick should not now be friends."—"Certainly," said Mrs. Horton; "for as soon as my Lord Frederick is made acquainted with Miss Milner's confession, all differences must be reconciled."—"What confession?" asked Lord Elmwood.

Miss Milner, to avoid hearing a repetition of that which gave her pain even to recollect, rose in order to retire into her own apartment, but was obliged to sit down again, till she received the assistance of Lord Elmwood and her friend, who led her into her dressing-room. She reclined upon a sofa there, and though left alone with that friend, a silence followed for half an hour: nor, when the conversation began, was the name of Dorriforth once uttered; they were grown cool and considerate since the discovery, and both were equally fearful of naming him.

The vanity of the world, the folly of riches, the charms of retirement, and such topics engaged their discourse, but not their thoughts, for near two hours; and the first time the word Dorriforth was spoken by a servant, who with alacrity opened the dressing-room door, without previously rapping, and cried, "Madam, Mr. Dorriforth."

Dorriforth immediately came in, and went eagerly to Miss Milner. Miss Woodley beheld the glow of joy and of guilt upon her face, and did not rise to give him her seat, as was her custom, when she was sitting by his ward, and he came to her with intelligence. He therefore stood while he repeated all that had happened in his interview with Lord Frederick.

But with her gladness to see her guardian safe, she had forgot to enquire of the safety of his antagonist—of the man whom she had pretended to love so passionately: even smiles of rapture were upon her face, though Dorriforth might be returned from putting him to death. This incongruity of behaviour Miss Woodley observed, and was confounded; but Dorriforth, in

whose thoughts a suspicion either of her love for him or indifference for Lord Frederick had no place, easily reconciled this inconsistency, and said,—

“You see by my countenance that all is well; and therefore you smile on me before I tell you what has passed.”

This brought her to the recollection of her conduct; and now, with looks ill constrained, she attempted the expression of an alarm she did not feel.

“Nay, I assure you Lord Frederick is safe,” he resumed, “and the disgrace of his blow washed entirely away by a few drops of blood from this arm.” And he laid his hand upon his left arm, which rested in his waistcoat as a kind of sling.

She cast her eyes there, and seeing where the ball had entered the coat sleeve, she gave an involuntary scream, and reclined upon the sofa. Instead of that affectionate sympathy which Miss Woodley used to exert upon her slightest illness or affliction, she now addressed her in an un pitying tone, and said, “Miss Milner, you have heard Lord Frederick is safe: you have therefore nothing to alarm you.” Nor did she run to hold a smelling-bottle, or to raise her head. Her guardian seeing her near fainting, and without any assistance from her friend, was going himself to give it; but on this, Miss Woodley interfered, and having taken her head upon her arm, assured him, “it was a weakness to which Miss Milner was very subject; and she would ring for her maid, who knew how to relieve her instantly with a few drops. Satisfied with this assurance, Dorriforth left the room; and a surgeon being come to examine his wound, he retired into his own chamber.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE power delegated by the confidential to those intrusted with their secrets, Miss Woodley was the last person on earth to abuse—but she was also the last who, by an accommodating complacency, would participate in the guilt of her friend—and

there was no guilt, except that of murder, which she thought equal to the crime in question, if it was ever perpetrated. Adultery, reason would perhaps have informed her, was a more pernicious evil to society; but to a religious mind, what sound is so horrible as *sacrilege*? Of vows made to God or to man, the former must weigh the heaviest. Moreover, the sin of infidelity in the married state is not a little softened, to common understandings, by its frequency; whereas, of religious vows broken by a devotee she had never heard; unless where the offence had been followed by such examples of divine vengeance, such miraculous punishments in this world (as well as eternal punishment in the other), as served to exaggerate the wickedness.

She, who could and who did pardon Miss Milner, was the person who saw her passion in the severest light, and resolved upon every method, however harsh, to root it from her heart; nor did she fear success, resting on the certain assurance, that however deep her love might be fixed, it would never be returned. Yet this confidence did not prevent her taking every precaution lest Dorriforth should come to the knowledge of it. She would not have his composed mind disturbed with such a thought—his steadfast principles so much as shaken by the imagination—nor overwhelm him with those self-reproaches which his fatal attraction, unpremeditated as it was, would still have drawn upon him.

With this plan of concealment, in which the natural modesty of Miss Milner acquiesced, there was but one effort for which this unhappy ward was not prepared; and that was an entire separation from her guardian. She had, from the first, cherished her passion without the most remote prospect of a return: she was prepared to see Dorriforth, without ever seeing him more nearly connected to her than as her guardian and friend; but not to see him at all—for *that*, she was not prepared.

But Miss Woodley reflected upon the inevitable necessity of this measure before she made the proposal, and then made it with a firmness that might have done honour to the inflexibility of Dorriforth himself.

During the few days that intervened between her open confession of a passion for Lord Frederick, and this proposed plan of separation, the most intricate incoherence appeared in the

character of Miss Milner; and, in order to evade a marriage with him, and conceal, at the same time, the shameful propensity which lurked in her breast, she was at once on the point of declaring a passion for Sir Edward Ashton.

In the duel which had taken place between Lord Frederick and Dorriforth, the latter had received the fire of his antagonist, but positively refused to return it; by which he had kept his promise not to endanger his Lordship's life, and had reconciled Sandford, in great measure, to his behaviour; and Sandford now (his resolution once broken) no longer refused entering Miss Milner's house, but came whenever it was 'convenient, though he yet avoided the mistress of it as much as possible; or showed by every word and look, when she was present, that she was still less in his favour than she had ever been.

He visited Dorriforth on the evening of his engagement with Lord Frederick, and the next morning breakfasted with him in his own chamber; nor did Miss Milner see her guardian after his first return from that engagement before the following noon. She enquired, however, of his servant how he did, and was rejoiced to hear that his wound was but slight: yet this enquiry she durst not make before Miss Woodley.

When Dorriforth made his appearance the next day, it was evident that he had thrown from his heart a load of cares; and though they had left a languor upon his face, content was in his voice, in his manners, in every word and action. Far from seeming to retain any resentment against his ward, for the danger into which her imprudence had led him, he appeared rather to pity her indiscretion, and to wish to sooth the perturbation, which the recollection of her own conduct had evidently raised in her mind. His endeavours were successful—she was soothed every time he spoke to her; and had not the watchful eye of Miss Woodley stood guard over her inclinations, she had plainly discovered, that she was enraptured with the joy of seeing him again himself, after the danger to which he had been exposed.

These emotions, which she laboured to subdue, passed, however, the bounds of her ineffectual resistance, when at the time of her retiring after dinner, he said to her in a low voice, but such as it was meant the company should hear, "Do me the

favour, Miss Milner, to call at my study some time in the evening: I have to speak with you upon business."

She answered, "I will, sir." And her eyes swam with delight, in expectation of the interview.

Let not the reader, nevertheless, imagine, there was in that ardent expectation one idea which the most spotless mind, in love, might not have indulged without reproach. Sincere love (at least among the delicate of the female sex) is often gratified by that degree of enjoyment, or rather forbearance, which would be torture in the pursuit of any other passion. Real, delicate, and restrained love, such as Miss Milner's, was indulged in the sight of the object only; and having bound her wishes by her hopes, the height of her happiness was limited to a conversation in which no other but themselves took a part.

Miss Woodley was one of those who heard the appointment, but the only one who conceived by what sensation it was received.

While the ladies remained in the same room with Dorriforth, Miss Milner had thought of little except of him. As soon as they withdrew into another apartment, she remembered Miss Woodley; and turning her head suddenly, saw her friend's face imprinted with suspicion and displeasure. This at first was painful to her; but recollecting, that within a couple of hours she was to meet her guardian alone—to speak to him, and hear him speak to her only: every other thought was absorbed in that one, and she considered, with indifference, the uneasiness or the anger of her friend.

Miss Milner, to do justice to her heart, did not wish to beguile Dorriforth into the snares of love. Could any supernatural power have endowed her with the means, and at the same time have shown to her the ills that must arise from such an effect of her charms, she had assuredly virtue enough to have declined the conquest; but without enquiring what she proposed, she never saw him, without previously endeavouring to look more attractive than she would have desired before any other person. And now, without listening to the thousand exhortations that spoke in every feature of Miss Woodley, she flew to a looking-glass, to adjust her dress in a manner that she thought most enchanting.

Time stole away, and the time of going to her guardian arrived. In his presence, unsupported by the presence of any other, every grace that she had practised, every look that she had borrowed to set off her charms, were annihilated; and she became a native beauty, with the artless arguments of reason, only, for her aid. Awed thus by his power, from every thing but what she really was, she never was perhaps half so bewitching, as in those timid, respectful, and embarrassed moments she passed alone with him. He caught at those times her respect, her diffidence, nay, even her embarrassment; and never would one word of anger pass on either side.

On the present occasion, he first expressed the high satisfaction that she had given him, by at length revealing to him the real state of her mind.

"And when I take every thing into consideration, Miss Milner," added he, "I rejoice that your sentiments happen to be such as you have owned. For, although my Lord Frederick is not the very man I could have wished for your perfect happiness, yet, in the state of human perfection and human happiness, you might have fixed your affections with perhaps less propriety; and still, where my unwillingness to have thwarted your inclinations might not have permitted me to contend with them."

Not a word of reply did this speech demand; or, if it had, not a word could she have given.

"And now, madam, the reason of my desire to speak with you is, to know the means you think most proper to pursue, in order to acquaint Lord Frederick, that, notwithstanding this late repulse, there are hopes of your partiality in his favour."

"Defer the explanation," she replied, eagerly.

"I beg your pardon—it cannot be. Besides, how can you indulge a disposition thus unpitying? Even so ardently did I desire to render the man who loves you happy, that though he came armed against my life, had I not reflected, that previous to our engagement it would appear like fear, and the means of bartering for his forgiveness, I should have revealed your sentiments the moment I had seen him. When the engagement was over, I was too impatient to acquaint you with his safety, to think then on gratifying him. And, indeed, the delicacy of the declaration, after the many denials which you have no doubt given him, should

be considered. I therefore consult your opinion upon the manner in which it shall be made."

"Mr. Dorriforth, can you allow nothing to the moments of surprise, and that pity, which the fate impending inspired; and which might urge me to express myself of Lord Frederick in a manner my cooler thoughts will not warrant?"

"There was nothing in your expressions, my dear Miss Milner, the least equivocal. If you were off your guard when you pleaded for Lord Frederick, as I believe you were, you said more sincerely what you thought; and no discreet, or rather indiscreet, attempts to retract, can make me change the sentiments."

"I am very sorry," she replied, confused and trembling.

"Why sorry?—Come, give me commission to reveal your partiality. I'll not be too hard upon you: a hint from me will do. Hope is ever apt to interpret the slightest words to its own use, and a lover's hope is, beyond all others, sanguine."

"I never gave Lord Frederick hope."

"But you never plunged him into despair."

"His pursuit intimates that I never have; but he has no other proof."

"However light and frivolous you have been upon frivolous subjects, yet I must own, Miss Milner, that I did expect, when a case of this importance came seriously before you, you would have discovered a proper stability in your behaviour."

"I do, sir; and it was only when I was affected with a weakness, which arose from accident, that I have betrayed inconsistency."

"You then assert again, that you have no affection for my Lord Frederick?"

"Not enough to become his wife."

"You are alarmed at marriage, and I do not wonder you should be so: it shows a prudent foresight which does you honour. But, my dear, are there no dangers in a single state? If I may judge, Miss Milner, there are many more to a young lady of your accomplishments, than if you were under the protection of a husband."

"My father, Mr. Dorriforth, thought your protection sufficient."

"But that protection was rather to direct your choice, than

to be the cause of your not choosing at all. Give me leave to point out an observation which, perhaps, I have too frequently made before ; but upon this occasion I must intrude it once again. Miss Fenton is its object : her fortune is inferior to yours ; her personal attractions are less——”

Here the powerful glow of joy, and of gratitude, for an opinion so negligently, and yet so sincerely expressed, flew to Miss Milner's face, neck, and even to her hands and fingers : the blood mounted to every part of her skin that was visible, for not a fibre but felt the secret transport—that Dorriforth thought her more beautiful than the beautiful Miss Fenton.

If he observed her blushes, he was unsuspecting of the cause, and went on :—

“ There is, besides, in the temper of Miss Fenton, a sedateness that might with less hazard ensure *her* safety in an unmarried life ; and yet she very properly thinks it her duty, as she does not mean to seclude herself by any vows to the contrary, to become a wife ; and, in obedience to the counsel of her friends, will be married within a very few weeks.”

“ Miss Fenton may marry from obedience : I never will.”

“ You mean to say, that love shall alone induce you.”

“ I do.”

“ If you would point out a subject upon which I am the least able to reason, and on which my sentiments, such as they are, are formed only from theory, and even there more cautioned than instructed, it is the subject of love. And yet, even that little which I know, tells me, without a doubt, that what you said yesterday, pleading for Lord Frederick's life, was the result of the most violent and tender love.”

“ The *little you know*, then, Mr. Dorriforth, has deceived you. Had you *known more*, you would have judged otherwise.”

“ I submit to the merit of your reply ; but without allowing me a judge at all, I will appeal to those who were present with me.”

“ Are Mrs. Horton and Mr. Sandford to be the connoisseurs ?”

“ No : I'll appeal to Miss Fenton and Miss Woodley.”

“ And yet I believe,” replied she with a smile, “ I believe theory must only be the judge even there.”

"Then, from all you have said, madam, on this occasion, I am to conclude that you still refuse to marry Lord Frederick?"

"You are."

"And you submit never to see him again?"

"I do."

"All you then said to me yesterday was false?"

"I was not mistress of myself at the time."

"Therefore it was truth! For shame, for shame!"

At that moment the door opened, and Mr. Sandford walked in. He started back on seeing Miss Milner, and was going away; but Dorriforth called to him to stay, and said with warmth,—

"Tell me, Mr. Sandford, by what power, by what persuasion, I can prevail upon Miss Milner to confide in me as her friend; to lay her heart open, and credit mine when I declare to her that I have no view in all the advice I give to her, but her immediate welfare."

"Mr. Dorriforth, you know my opinion of that lady," replied Sandford: "it has been formed ever since my first acquaintance with her, and it continues the same."

"But instruct me how I am to inspire her with confidence," returned Dorriforth; "how I am to impress her with a sense of that which is for her advantage."

"You can work no miracles," replied Sandford: "you are not holy enough."

"And yet my ward," answered Dorriforth, "appears to be acquainted with that mystery: for what but the force of a miracle can induce her to contradict to-day what before you, and several other witnesses, she positively acknowledged yesterday?"

"Do you call that miraculous?" cried Sandford: "the miracle had been if she had *not* done so; for did she not yesterday contradict what she acknowledged the day before? and will she not to-morrow disavow what she says to-day?"

"I wish that she may," replied Dorriforth, mildly; for he saw the tears flowing down her face at the rough and severe manner in which Sandford had spoken, and he began to feel for her uneasiness.

"I beg pardon," cried Sandford, "for speaking so rudely to the mistress of the house. I have no business here, I know ;

but where *you* are, Mr. Dorriforth, unless I am turned out, I shall always think it my duty to come."

Miss Milner courtesied, as much as to say he was welcome to come. He continued,—

"I was to blame, that upon a nice punctilio, I left you so long without my visits, and without my counsel: in that time, you have run the hazard of being murdered, and, what is worse, of being excommunicated; for had you been so rash as to have returned your opponent's fire, not all my interest at Rome would have obtained remission of the punishment."

Miss Milner, through all her tears, could not now restrain her laughter. On which he resumed:—

"And here do I venture, like a missionary among savages; but if I can only save you from their scalping knives—from the miseries which that lady is preparing for you—I am rewarded."

Sandford spoke this with great fervour; and the offence of her love never appeared to her in so tremendous a point of view, as when thus, unknowingly, alluded to by him.

"*The miseries that lady is preparing for you*" hung upon her ears like the notes of a raven, and sounded equally ominous. The words "*murder*" and "*excommunication*" he had likewise uttered; all the fatal effects of sacrilegious love. Frightful superstitions struck her to the heart, and she could scarcely prevent falling down under their oppression.

Dorriforth beheld the difficulty she had in sustaining herself, and with the utmost tenderness went towards her; and, supporting her, said, "I beg your pardon; I invited you hither with a far different intention than your uneasiness; and be assured—"

Sandford was beginning to speak, when Dorriforth resumed:—"Hold, Mr. Sandford: the lady is under my protection; and I know not whether it is not requisite that you should apologise to her, and to me for what you have already said."

"You asked my opinion, or I had not given it you: would you have me, like *her*, speak what I do not think?"

"Say no more, sir," cried Dorriforth; and, leading her kindly to the door, as if to defend her from his malice, told her, "he would take another opportunity of renewing the subject."

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN Dorriforth was alone with Sandford, he explained to him what before he had only hinted ; and this learned Jesuit frankly confessed, "That the mind of woman was far above, or rather beneath, his comprehension." It was so, indeed ; for with all his penetration, and few even of that school had more, he had not yet penetrated into the recesses of Miss Milner's mind.

Miss Woodley, to whom she repeated all that had passed between herself, her guardian, and Sandford, took this moment, in the agitation of her spirits, to alarm her still more by prophetic insinuations ; and at length represented to her here, for the first time, the necessity, "that Mr. Dorriforth and she no longer should remain under the same roof." This was like the stroke of sudden death to Miss Milner ; and, clinging to life, she endeavoured to avert the blow by prayers, and by promises. Her friend loved her too sincerely to be prevailed upon.

"But in what manner can I accomplish the separation ?" cried she : "for, till I marry, we are obliged, by my father's request, to live in the same house."

"Miss Milner," answered Miss Woodley, "much as I respect the will of a dying man, I regard your and Mr. Dorriforth's present and eternal happiness much more ; and it is my resolution that you *shall part*. If *you* will not contrive the means, that duty falls on me ; and without any invention, I see the measure at once."

"What is it ?" cried Miss Milner, eagerly.

"I will reveal to Mr. Dorriforth, without hesitation, the real state of your heart ; which your present inconsistency of conduct will but too readily confirm."

"You would not plunge me into so much shame, into so much anguish !" cried she, distractedly.

"No," replied Miss Woodley, "not for the world, if you will separate from him by any mode of your own : but that you *shall* separate is my determination ; and in spite of all your sufferings, this shall be the expedient, unless you instantly agree to some other."

"Good Heavens, Miss Woodley ! is this your friendship ?"

"Yes—and the truest friendship I have to bestow. Think what a task I undertake for your sake and his, when I condemn myself to explain to him your weakness. What astonishment ! what confusion ! what remorse do I foresee painted upon his face ! I hear him call you by the harshest names, and behold him fly from your sight for ever, as from an object of his detestation."

"Oh, spare the dreadful picture ! Fly from my sight for ever ! Detest my name ! Oh, my dear Miss Woodley ! let but his friendship for me still remain, and I will consent to any thing. You may command me. I will go away from him directly ; but let us part in friendship. Oh ! without the friendship of Mr. Dorriforth, life would be a heavy burden, indeed."

Miss Woodley immediately began to contrive schemes for their separation ; and, with all her invention alive on the subject, the following was the only natural one that she could form.

Miss Milner, in a letter to her distant relation at Bath, was to complain of the melancholy of a country life, which she was to say her guardian imposed upon her ; and she was to entreat the lady to send a pressing invitation that she would pass a month or two at her house : this invitation was to be laid before Dorriforth for his approbation ; and the two ladies were to enforce it, by expressing their earnest wishes for his consent. This plan having been properly regulated, the necessary letter was sent to Bath, and Miss Woodley waited with patience, but with a watchful guard upon the conduct of her friend, till the answer should arrive.

During this interim a tender and complaining epistle from Lord Frederick was delivered to Miss Milner ; to which, as he received no answer, he prevailed upon his uncle, with whom he resided, to wait upon her, and obtain a verbal reply ; for he still flattered himself, that fear of her guardian's anger, or per-

haps his interception of the letter which he had sent, was the sole cause of her apparent indifference.

The old gentleman was introduced both to Miss Milner and to Mr. Dorriforth; but received from each an answer so explicit, that it left his nephew no longer in doubt but that all farther pursuit was vain.

Sir Edward Ashton, about this time, also submitted to a formal dismission; and had then the mortification to reflect, that he was bestowing upon the object of his affections the tenderest proof of his regard by having absented himself entirely from her society.

Upon this serious and certain conclusion to the hopes of Lord Frederick, Dorriforth was more astonished than ever at the conduct of his ward. He had once thought her behaviour in this respect was ambiguous; but since her confession of a passion for that nobleman, he had no doubt but in the end she would become his wife. He lamented to find himself mistaken, and thought it proper now to condemn her caprice, not merely in words, but in the general tenour of his behaviour. He consequently became more reserved, and more austere than he had been since his first acquaintance with her; for his manners, not from design, but imperceptibly to himself, had been softened since he became her guardian, by that tender respect which he had uniformly paid to the object of his protection.

Notwithstanding the severity he now assumed, his ward, in the prospect of parting from him, grew melancholy; Miss Woodley's love to her friend rendered her little otherwise; and Dorriforth's peculiar gravity, frequently rigour, could not but make their whole party less cheerful than it had been. Lord Elmwood, too, at this time was lying dangerously ill of a fever; Miss Fenton, of course, was as much in sorrow as her nature would permit her to be; and both Sandford and Dorriforth were in extreme concern upon his Lordship's account.

In this posture of affairs, the letter of invitation arrives from Lady Luneham at Bath. It was shown to Dorriforth; and, to prove to his ward that he is so much offended as no longer to feel that excessive interest in her concerns which he once felt, he gives an opinion on the subject with indifference: he desires "Miss Milner will do what she herself thinks proper." Miss

Woodley instantly accepts this permission, writes back, and appoints the day upon which her friend means to set off for the visit.

Miss Milner is wounded at the heart by the cold and unkind manners of her guardian, but dares not take one step to retrieve his opinion. Alone, or to her friend, she sighs and weeps: he discovers her sorrow, and is doubtful whether the departure of Lord Frederick from that part of the country is not the cause.

When the time she was to set out for Bath was only two days off, the behaviour of Dorriforth took, by degrees, its usual form, if not a greater share of polite and tender attention than ever. It was the first time he had parted from Miss Milner since he became her guardian, and he felt upon the occasion a reluctance. He had been angry with her, he had shown her that he was so, and he now began to wish that he had not. She is not happy (he considered within himself): every word and action declares she is not: I may have been too severe, and added perhaps to her uneasiness. "At least we will part on good terms," said he. "Indeed, my regard for her is such, I cannot do otherwise."

She soon discerned his returning kindness; and it was a gentle tie that would have fastened her to that spot for ever, but for the firm resistance of Miss Woodley.

"What will the absence of a few months effect?" said she, pleading her own cause. "At the end of a few months at farthest he will expect me back; and where then will be the merit of this separation?"

"In that time," replied Miss Woodley, "we may find some method to make it longer." To this she listened with a kind of despair, but uttered she was "resigned,"—and she prepared for her departure.

Dorriforth was all anxiety that every circumstance of her journey should be commodious: he was eager she should be happy; and he was eager she should see that he entirely forgave her. He would have gone part of the way with her, but for the extreme illness of Lord Elmwood, in whose chamber he passed most of the day, and slept in Elmwood House every night.

On the morning of her journey, when Dorriforth gave his hand, and conducted Miss Milner to the carriage, all the way

he led her she could not restrain her tears ; which increased, as he parted from her, to convulsive sobs. He was affected by her grief ; and though he had previously bid her farewell, he drew her gently on one side, and said, with the tenderest concern, "My dear Miss Milner, we part friends? I hope we do. On my side, depend upon it, that I regret nothing so much, at our separation, as having ever given you a moment's pain."

"I believe so," was all she could utter ; for she hastened from him lest his discerning eye should discover the cause of the weakness which thus overcame her. But her apprehensions were groundless : the rectitude of his own heart was a bar to the suspicion of hers. He once more kindly bade her adieu, and the carriage drove away.

Miss Fenton and Miss Woodley accompanied her part of the journey, about thirty miles, where they were met by Sir Henry and Lady Luneham. Here was a parting nearly as affecting as that between her and her guardian.

Miss Woodley, who for several weeks, had treated her friend with a rigidness she herself hardly supposed was in her nature, now bewailed that she had done so ; implored her forgiveness ; promised to correspond with her punctually, and omit no opportunity of giving her every consolation short of cherishing her fatal passion ; but in that, and that only, was the heart of Miss Milner to be consoled.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Miss Milner arrived at Bath, she thought it the most altered place she had ever seen. She was mistaken : it was herself that was changed.

The walks were melancholy, the company insipid, the ball-room fatiguing ; for—she had left behind all that could charm or please her.

Though she found herself much less happy than when she was at Bath before, yet she felt that she would not, even to enjoy

all that past happiness, be again reduced to the being she was at that period. Thus does the lover consider the extinction of his passion with the same horror as the libertine looks upon annihilation: the one would live hereafter, though in all the tortures described as constituting his future state, than cease to exist; so there are no tortures which a lover would not suffer rather than cease to love.

In the wide prospect of sadness before her, Miss Milner's fancy caught hold of the only comfort which presented itself; and this, faint as it was, in the total absence of every other, her imagination painted to her as excessive. The comfort was a letter from Miss Woodley—a letter, in which the subject of her love would most assuredly be mentioned; and, in whatever terms, it would still be the means of delight.

A letter arrived—she devoured it with her eyes. The post mark denoting from whence it came, the name of “Milner Lodge” written on the top, were all sources of pleasure; and she read slowly every line it contained, to procrastinate the pleasing expectation she enjoyed, till she should arrive at the name of Dorriforth. At last her impatient eye caught the word three lines beyond the place where she was reading: irresistibly, she skipped over those lines, and fixed on the point to which she was attracted.

Miss Woodley was cautious in her indulgence; she made the slightest mention possible of Dorriforth; saying only, “he was extremely concerned, and even dejected, at the little hope there was of his cousin Lord Elmwood's recovery.” Short and trivial as this passage was, it was still more important to Miss Milner than any other in the letter: she read it again and again, considered, and reflected upon it. Dejected! thought she; what does that word exactly mean? Did I ever see Mr. Dorriforth dejected? How, I wonder, does he look in that state? Thus did she muse, while the cause of his dejection, though a most serious one, and pathetically described by Miss Woodley, scarcely arrested her attention. She ran over with haste the account of Lord Elmwood's state of health: she certainly pitied him while she thought of him, but she did not think of him long. To die, was a hard fate for a young nobleman just in possession of his immense fortune, and on the eve of marriage with a beautiful young woman; but Miss Milner thought that an abode in

Heaven might be still better than all this, and she had no doubt but that his lordship would be an inhabitant there. The forlorn state of Miss Fenton ought to have been a subject for her compassion ; but she knew that lady had resignation to bear any lot with patience, and that a trial of her fortitude might be more flattering to her vanity than to be Countess of Elmwood : in a word, she saw no one's misfortunes equal to her own, because she knew no one so little able to bear misfortune.

She replied to Miss Woodley's letter, and dwelt very long on that subject which her friend had passed over lightly. This was another indulgence ; and this epistolary intercourse was now the only enjoyment she possessed. From Bath she paid several visits with Lady Luneham : all were alike tedious and melancholy.

But her guardian wrote to her ; and though it was on a topic of sorrow, the letter gave her joy. The sentiments it expressed were merely common-place, yet she valued them as the dearest effusions of friendship and affection ; and her hands trembled, and her heart beat with rapture, while she wrote the answer, though she knew it would not be received by him with one emotion like those which she experienced. In her second letter to Miss Woodley, she prayed like a person insane to be taken home from confinement ; and, like a lunatic, protested in sensible language she " had no disorder." But her friend replied, " that very declaration proves its violence." And she assured her, nothing less than placing her affections elsewhere should induce her to believe but that she was incurable.

The third letter from Milner Lodge brought the news of Lord Elmwood's death. Miss Woodley was exceedingly affected by this event, and said little else on any other subject. Miss Milner was shocked when she read the words, " he is dead," and instantly thought,—

" How transient are all sublunary things ! Within a few years *I* shall be dead ; and how happy will it then be, if I have resisted every temptation to the alluring pleasures of this life !" The happiness of a peaceful death occupied her contemplation for near an hour ; but at length every virtuous and pious sentiment this meditation inspired served but to remind her of the many sentences she had heard from her guardian's lips upon the same subject : her thoughts were again fixed on him, and she could think of nothing besides.

In a short time after this, her health became impaired from the indisposition of her mind: she languished, and was once in imminent danger. During a slight delirium of her fever, Miss Woodley's name and her guardian's were incessantly repeated. Lady Luneham sent them immediate word of this; and they both hastened to Bath, and arrived there just as the violence and danger of her disorder had ceased. As soon as she became perfectly recollected, her first care, knowing the frailty of her heart, was to enquire what she had uttered while delirious. Miss Woodley, who was by her bedside, begged her not to be alarmed on that account, and assured her she knew, from all her attendants, that she had only spoken with a friendly remembrance (as was really the case) of those persons who were dear to her.

She wished to know whether her guardian was come to see her, but she had not the courage to ask before her friend; and she in her turn was afraid, by the too sudden mention of his name, to discompose her. Her maid, however, after some little time, entered the chamber, and whispered Miss Woodley. Miss Milner asked inquisitively, "what she said?"

The maid replied softly, "Lord Elmwood, madam, wishes to come and see you for a few moments, if you will allow him."

At this reply Miss Milner started wildly.

"I thought," said she, "I thought Lord Elmwood had been dead. Are my senses disordered still?"

"No, my dear," answered Miss Woodley; "it is the present Lord Elmwood who wishes to see you: he whom you left ill when you came hither *is* dead,"

"And who is the present Lord Elmwood?" she asked.

Miss Woodley, after a short hesitation, replied,—*"Your guardian."*

"And so he is," cried Miss Milner; "he is the next heir—I had forgot. But is it possible that he is here?"

"Yes," returned Miss Woodley, with a grave voice and manner, to moderate that glow of satisfaction which for a moment sparkled even in her languid eye, and blushed over her pallid countenance,—*"yes; as he heard you were ill, he thought it right to come and see you."*

"He is very good," she answered, and the tear started in her eyes.

"Would you please to see his Lordship?" asked her maid.

"Not yet, not yet," she replied; "let me recollect myself first." And she looked with a timid doubt upon her friend, to ask if it was proper.

Miss Woodley could hardly support this humble reference to her judgment, from the wan face of the poor invalid, and taking her by the hand, whispered, "You shall do what you please." In a few minutes Lord Elmwood was introduced.

To those who sincerely love, every change of situation or circumstance in the object beloved appears an advantage. So the acquisition of a title and estate was, in Miss Milner's eye, an inestimable advantage to her guardian; not on account of their real value, but that any change, instead of diminishing her passion, would have served only to increase it, even a change to the utmost poverty.

When he entered, the sight of him seemed to be too much for her; and after the first glance she turned her head away. The sound of his voice encouraged her to look once more; and then she riveted her eyes upon him.

"It is impossible, my dear Miss Milner," he gently whispered, "to say what joy I feel that your disorder has subsided."

But though it was impossible to say, it was possible to *look* what he felt, and his looks expressed his feelings. In the zeal of those sensations, he laid hold of her hand, and held it between his: this he did not himself know; but she did.

"You have prayed for me, my Lord, I make no doubt," said she, and smiled, as if thanking him for those prayers.

"Fervently, ardently!" returned he; and the fervency with which he had prayed spoke in every feature.

"But I am a Protestant, you know; and if I had died such, do you believe I should have gone to Heaven?"

"Most assuredly, that would not have prevented you."

"But Mr. Sandford does not think so."

"He must; for he hopes to go there himself."

To keep her guardian with her, Miss Milner seemed inclined to converse; but her solicitous friend gave Lord Elmwood a look which implied that it might be injurious to her, and he retired.

They had only one more interview before he left the place, at which Miss Milner was capable of sitting up. He was with her, however, but a very short time, some necessary concerns

relative to his late kinsman's affairs calling him in haste to London. Miss Woodley continued with her friend till she saw her entirely reinstated in her health ; during which time her guardian was frequently the subject of their private conversation ; and upon those occasions Miss Milner has sometimes brought Miss Woodley to acknowledge, "that could Mr. Dorriforth have possibly foreseen the early death of the last Lord Elmwood, it had been more for the honour of his religion (as that ancient title would now after him become extinct), if he had preferred marriage vows to those of celibacy."

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN the time for Miss Woodley's departure arrived, Miss Milner entreated earnestly to accompany her home, and made the most solemn promises that she would guard not only her behaviour, but her very thoughts, within the limitation her friend should prescribe. Miss Woodley at length yielded thus far, "That as soon as Lord Elmwood was set out on his journey to Italy, where she had heard him say that he should soon be obliged to go, she would no longer deny her the pleasure of returning ; and if (after the long absence which must consequently take place between him and her) she could positively affirm the suppression of her passion was the happy result, she would then take her word, and risk the danger of seeing them once more reside together."

This concession having been obtained, they parted ; and, as winter was now far advanced, Miss Woodley returned to her aunt's house in town, from whence Mrs. Horton was, however, preparing to remove, in order to superintend Lord Elmwood's house (which had been occupied by the late earl), in Grosvenor Square ; and her niece was to accompany her.

If Lord Elmwood was not desirous that Miss Milner should conclude her visit and return to his protection, it was partly from the multiplicity of affairs in which he was at this time en-

gaged, and partly from having Mr. Sandford now entirely placed with him as his chaplain ; for he dreaded, that living in the same house, their natural antipathy might be increased even to aversion. Upon this account, he once thought of advising Mr. Sandford to take up his abode elsewhere ; but the great pleasure he took in his society, joined to the bitter mortification he knew such a proposal would be to his friend, would not suffer him to make it.

Miss Milner all this time was not thinking upon those she hated, but on those she loved. Sandford never came into her thoughts, while the image of Lord Elmwood never left them. One morning, as she sat talking to Lady Luneham on various subjects, but thinking alone on him, Sir Harry Luneham, with another gentleman, a Mr. Fleetmond, came in, and the conversation turned upon the improbability there had been, at the present Lord Elmwood's birth, that he should ever inherit the title and estate which had now fallen to him ;—and, said Mr. Fleetmond, “independent of rank and fortune, this unexpected occurrence must be matter of infinite joy to Mr. Dorriforth.”

“No,” answered Sir Harry, “independent of rank and fortune, it must be a motive of concern to him ; for he must now regret, beyond measure, his folly in taking priest's orders ; thus depriving himself of the hopes of an heir, so that his title, at his death, will be lost.”

“By no means,” replied Mr. Fleetmond: “he may yet have an heir, for he will certainly marry.”

“Marry!” cried the baronet.

“Yes,” answered the other ; “it was that I meant by the joy it might probably give him, beyond the possession of his estate and title.”

“How be married ?” said Lady Luneham. “Has he not taken a vow never to marry ?”

“Yes,” answered Mr. Fleetmond ; “but there are no *religious* vows from which the sovereign pontiff at Rome cannot grant a dispensation : as those commandments which are made by the Church, the Church has always the power to revoke ; and when it is for the general good of religion, his holiness thinks it incumbent on him to publish his bull, and remit all penalties for their non-observance. Certainly it is for the honour of the Catholics, that this earldom should continue in a Catholic family.

In short, I'll venture to lay a wager, my Lord Elmwood is married within a year."

Miss Milner, who listened with attention, feared she was in a dream, or deceived by the pretended knowledge of Mr. Fleetmond, who might know nothing :—yet all that he had said was very probable ; and he was himself a Roman Catholic, so that he must be well informed on the subject upon which he spoke. If she had heard the direst news that ever sounded in the ear of the most susceptible of mortals, the agitation of her mind and person could not have been stronger : she felt, while every word was speaking, a chill through all her veins—a pleasure too exquisite, not to bear along with it the sensation of exquisite pain ; of which she was so sensible, that for a few moments it made her wish that she had not heard the intelligence ; though, very soon after, she would not but have heard it for the world.

As soon as she had recovered from her first astonishment and joy, she wrote to Miss Woodley an exact account of what she had heard, and received this answer :—

"I am sorry any body should have given you this piece of information, because it was a task in executing which I had promised myself extreme satisfaction ;—but from the fear that your health was not yet strong enough to support, without some danger, the burden of hopes which I knew would, upon this occasion, press upon you, I deferred my communication, and it has been anticipated. Yet, as you seem in doubt as to the reality of what you have been told, perhaps this confirmation of it may fall very little short of the first news ; especially when it is enforced by my request, that you will come to us, as soon as you can with propriety leave Lady Luneham.

"Come, my dear Miss Milner, and find in your once rigid monitor a faithful confidante. I will no longer threaten to disclose a secret you have trusted me with, but leave it to the wisdom or sensibility of *his* heart (who is now to penetrate into the hearts of our sex in search of one that may beat in unison with his own) to find the secret out. I no longer condemn, but congratulate you on your passion ; and will assist you with all my advice and my earnest wishes, that it may obtain a return."

This letter was another of those excruciating pleasures, that almost reduced Miss Milner to the grave. Her appetite forsook her ; and she vainly endeavoured for several nights to close

her eyes. She thought so much upon the prospect of accomplishing her hopes, that she could admit no other idea ; not even invent one probable excuse for leaving Lady Luneham before the appointed time, which was then at the distance of two months. She wrote to Miss Woodley to beg her contrivance, to reproach her for keeping the intelligence so long from her, and to thank her for having revealed it in so kind a manner at last. She begged also to be acquainted how Mr. Dorriforth (for still she called him by that name) spoke and thought of this sudden change in his prospects.

Miss Woodley's reply was a summons for her to town upon some pretended business, which she avoided explaining, but which entirely silenced Lady Luneham's entreaties for her stay.

To her question concerning Lord Elmwood she answered, "It is a subject on which he seldom speaks : he appears just the same he ever did ; nor could you by any part of his conduct conceive that any such change had taken place." Miss Milner exclaimed to herself, "I am glad he is not altered. If his words, looks, or manners, were any thing different from what they formerly were, I should not like him so well." And just the reverse would have been the case, had Miss Woodley sent her word he was changed. The day for her leaving Bath was fixed : she expected it with rapture ; but before its arrival, she sunk under the care of expectation ; and when it came, was so much indisposed, as to be obliged to defer her journey for a week.

At length she found herself in London—in the house of her guardian—and that guardian no longer bound to a single life, but *enjoined* to marry. He appeared in her eyes, as in Miss Woodley's, the same as ever ; or perhaps more endearing than ever, as it was the first time she had beheld him with hope. Mr. Sandford did *not* appear the same ; yet he was in reality as surly and as disrespectful in his behaviour to her as usual ; but she did not observe, or she did not feel his morose temper as heretofore—he seemed amiable, mild, and gentle ; at least this was the happy medium through which her self-complacent mind began to see him : for good humour, like the jaundice, makes every one of its own complexion.

CHAPTER XX.

LORD ELMWOOD was preparing to go abroad for the purpose of receiving in form the dispensation from his vows : it was, however, a subject he seemed carefully to avoid speaking upon ; and when by any accident he was obliged to mention it, it was without any marks either of satisfaction or concern.

Miss Milner's pride began to be alarmed. While he was Mr. Dorriforth, and confined to a single life, his indifference to her charms was rather an honourable than a reproachful trait in his character ; and, in reality, she admired him for the insensibility. But on the eve of being at liberty, and on the eve of making his choice, she was offended *that* choice was not immediately fixed upon her. She had been accustomed to receive the devotion of every man who saw her ; and not to obtain it of the man from whom, of all others, she most wished it, was cruelly humiliating. She complained to Miss Woodley, who advised her to have patience ; but that was one of the virtues in which she was least practised.

Nevertheless, encouraged by her friend in the commendable desire of gaining the affections of him, who possessed all her own, she left no means unattempted for the conquest ; but she began with too great a certainty of success, not to be sensible of the deepest mortification in the disappointment ; nay, she now anticipated disappointment, as she had before anticipated success ; by turns feeling the keenest emotions from hope and from despair.

As these passions alternately governed her, she was alternately in spirits or dejected ; in good or in ill humour ; and the vicissitudes of her prospect at length gave to her behaviour an air of caprice, which not all her follies had till now produced. This was not the way to secure the affections of Lord Elmwood : she knew it was not ; and before him she was under some restriction. Sandford observed this ; and, without reserve, added

to the list of her other failings hypocrisy. It was plain to see that Mr. Sandford esteemed her less and less every day; and as he was the person who most influenced the opinion of her guardian, he became to her, very soon, an object not merely of dislike but of abhorrence.

These mutual sentiments were discoverable in every word and action, while they were in each other's company; but still in his absence, Miss Milner's good nature, and total freedom from malice, never suffered her to utter a sentence injurious to his interest. Sandford's charity did not extend thus far; and speaking of her with severity one evening, while she was at the opera, "his meaning," as he said, "but to caution her guardian against her faults," Lord Elmwood replied,—

"There is one fault, however, Mr. Sandford, I cannot lay to her charge."

"And what is that, my Lord?" cried Sandford, eagerly. "What is that one fault Miss Milner has not?"

"I never," replied Lord Elmwood, "heard Miss Milner, in your absence, utter a syllable to your disadvantage."

"She dares not, my Lord, because she is in fear of you; and she knows you would not suffer it."

"She then," answered his Lordship, "pays me a much higher compliment than you do; for you freely censure *her*, and yet imagine I *will* suffer it."

"My Lord," replied Sandford, "I am undeceived now, and shall never take that liberty again."

As Lord Elmwood always treated Sandford with the utmost respect, he began to fear he had been deficient upon this occasion; and the disposition which had induced him to take his ward's part was likely, in the end, to prove unfavourable to her: for perceiving that Sandford was offended at what had passed, as the only means of an atonement, he began himself to lament her volatile and captious propensities; in which lamentation, Sandford, now forgetting his affront, joined with the heartiest concurrence, adding,—

"You, sir, having at present other cares to employ your thoughts, ought to insist upon her marrying, or retiring wholly into the country."

She returned home just as this conversation was finished; and Sandford, the moment she entered, rang for his candle to

retire. Miss Woodley, who had been at the opera with Miss Milner, cried,—

“Bless me! Mr. Sandford, are you not well, you are going to leave us so early?”

He replied, “No : I have a pain in my head.”

Miss Milner, who never listened to complaints without sympathy, rose immediately from the chair she was just seated on, saying,—

“I think I never heard you, Mr. Sandford, complain of indisposition before. Will you accept of my specific for the headach? Indeed, it is a certain relief—I’ll fetch it instantly.”

She went hastily out of the room, and returned with a bottle, which, she assured him, “was a present from Lady Luneham, and would certainly cure him.” And she pressed it upon him with such an anxious earnestness, that, with all his churlishness, he could not refuse taking it.

This was but a common-place civility, such as is paid by one enemy to another every day ; but the *manner* was the material part. The unaffected concern, the attention, the good-will she demonstrated in this little incident, was that which made it remarkable ; and which immediately took from Lord Elmwood the displeasure to which he had been just before provoked, or rather transformed it into a degree of admiration. Even Sandford was not insensible to her kindness, and in return, when he left the room, “wished her good night.”

To her and Miss Woodley, who had not been witnesses of the preceding conversation, what she had done appeared of no merit : but to the mind of Lord Elmwood the merit was infinite ; and, upon the departure of Sandford, he began to be unusually cheerful. He first pleasantly reproached the ladies for not offering him a place in their box at the opera.—“Would you have gone, my Lord?” asked Miss Milner, highly delighted.

“Certainly,” returned he, “had you invited me.”

“Then from this day I give you a general invitation : nor shall any other company be admitted but those whom you approve.”

“I am very much obliged to you,” said he.

“And you,” continued she, “who have been accustomed only to church music, will be more than any one enchanted with hearing the softer music of love.

"What ravishing pleasures you are preparing for me!" returned he. "I know not whether my weak senses will be able to support them."

She had her eyes upon him when he spoke this; and she discovered in his, that were fixed upon her, a sensibility unexpected—a kind of fascination, which enticed her to look on, while her eyelids fell involuntarily before its mighty force, and a thousand blushes crowded over her face. He was struck with these sudden signals, hastily recalled its former countenance, and stopped the conversation.

Miss Woodley, who had been a silent observer for some time, now thought a word or two from her would be acceptable rather than troublesome.

"And pray, my Lord," said she, "when do you go to France?"

"To Italy, you mean: I shall not go at all," said he. "My superiors are very indulgent, for they dispense with all my duties. I ought, and I meant, to have gone abroad; but as a variety of concerns requires my presence in England, every necessary ceremony has taken place here."

"Then your Lordship is no longer in orders?" said Miss Woodley.

"No: they have been resigned these five days."

"My Lord, I give you joy," said Miss Milner.

He thanked her, but added, with a sigh, "If I have given up content in search of joy, I shall, perhaps, be a loser by the venture." Soon after this he wished them a good night, and retired.

Happy as Miss Milner found herself in his company, she saw him leave the room with infinite satisfaction, because her heart was impatient to give a loose to its hopes on the bosom of Miss Woodley. She bade Mrs. Horton immediately good night; and, in her friend's apartment, gave way to all the language of passion, warmed with the confidence of meeting its return. She described the sentiments she had read in Lord Elmwood's looks; and though Miss Woodley had beheld them too, Miss Milner's fancy heightened the expression of every glance, till her construction became, by degrees, so extremely favourable to her own wishes, that had not her friend been likewise present, and known in what measure to estimate those symptoms, she must

infallibly have thought, by the joy to which they gave birth, that he had openly avowed a passion for her.

Miss Woodley, of course, thought it her duty to allay these ecstasies, and represented to her she might be deceived in her hopes; or, even supposing his wishes inclined towards her, there were yet great obstacles between them. "Would not Sandford, who directed his every thought and purpose, be consulted upon this important one? And if he was, upon what but the most romantic affection on the part of Lord Elmwood had Miss Milner to depend? And his Lordship was not a man to be suspected of submitting to the excess of any passion." Thus did Miss Woodley argue, lest her friend should be misled by her hopes; yet, in her own mind, she scarcely harboured a doubt that any thing would occur to thwart them. The succeeding circumstance proved she was mistaken.

Another gentleman of family and fortune made overtures to Miss Milner; and her guardian, so far from having his thoughts inclined towards her on his own account, pleaded this lover's cause even with more zeal than he had pleaded for Sir Edward and Lord Frederick; thus at once destroying all those plans of happiness which poor Miss Milner had formed.

In consequence, her melancholy disposition of mind was now predominant: she confined herself at home, and, by her own express order, was denied to all her visitors. Whether this arose from pure melancholy, or the still lingering hope of making her conquest, by that sedateness of manners which she knew her guardian admired, she herself, perhaps, did not perfectly know. Be that as it may, Lord Elmwood could not but observe this change, and one morning thought fit to mention and to applaud it.

Miss Woodley and she were at work together when he came into the room; and after sitting several minutes, and talking upon indifferent subjects, to which his ward replied with a dejection in her voice and manner, he said,—

"Perhaps I am wrong, Miss Milner, but I have observed that you are lately more thoughtful than usual."

She blushed, as she always did when the subject was herself. He continued:—"Your health appears perfectly restored, and yet I have observed you take no delight in your former amusements."

"Are you sorry for that, my Lord?"

"No, I am extremely glad; and I was going to congratulate you upon the change. But give me leave to enquire to what fortunate accident we may attribute this alteration?"

"Your Lordship then thinks all my commendable deeds arise from accident, and that I have no virtues of my own."

"Pardon me, I think you have many." This he spoke emphatically, and her blushes increased.

He resumed:—"How can I doubt of a lady's virtues, when her countenance gives me such evident proofs of them? Believe me, Miss Milner, that in the midst of your gayest follies, while you thus continue to blush, I shall reverence your internal sensations."

"Oh, my Lord! did you know some of them, I am afraid you would think them unpardonable."

This was so much to the purpose, that Miss Woodley found herself alarmed, but without reason: Miss Milner loved too sincerely to reveal it to the object. He answered,—

"And did you know some of mine, you might think them *equally* unpardonable."

She turned pale, and could no longer guide her needle. In the fond transport of her heart she imagined that his love for her was among the sensations to which he alluded. She was too much embarrassed to reply, and he continued,—

"We have all much to pardon in one another; and I know not whether the officious person who forces even his good advice is not as blamable as the obstinate one who will not listen to it. And now, having made a preface to excuse you, should you once more refuse mine, I shall venture to give it."

"My Lord, I have never yet refused to follow your advice, but where my own peace of mind was so nearly concerned as to have made me culpable had I complied."

"Well, madam, I submit to your past determinations, and shall never again oppose your inclination to remain single."

This sentence, as it excluded the design of soliciting for himself, gave her the utmost pain; and her eye glanced at him, full of reproach. He did not observe it, but went on:—

"While you continue unmarried, it seems to have been your father's intention that you should continue under my immediate care; but as I mean for the future to reside chiefly in the coun-

try, answer me candidly, Do you think you could be happy there, for at least three parts of the year?"

After a short hesitation, she replied, "I have no objection."

"I am glad to hear it," he returned eagerly; "for it is my sincere desire to have you with me: your welfare is dear to me as my own; and were we apart, continual apprehensions would prey upon my mind."

The tear started in her eye, at the earnestness that accompanied these words: he saw it; and to soften her still more with the sense of his esteem for her, he increased his earnestness while he said,—

"If you will take the resolution to quit London, for the length of time I mention, there shall be no means omitted to make the country all you can wish. I shall insist upon Miss Woodley's company for both our sakes; and it will not only be *my* study to form such a society as you may approve, but I am certain it will be likewise the study of Lady Elmwood——"

He was going on; but, as if a poniard had thrust her to the heart, she writhed under this unexpected stroke.

He saw her countenance change—he looked at her steadfastly.

It was not a common change from joy to sorrow, from content to uneasiness, which Miss Milner discovered—she felt, and she expressed anguish. Lord Elmwood was alarmed and shocked. She did not weep; but she called Miss Woodley to come to her, with a voice that indicated a degree of agony.

"My Lord," cried Miss Woodley, seeing his consternation, and trembling lest he should guess the secret; "my Lord, Miss Milner has again deceived you: you must not take her from London—it is that, and that alone, which is the cause of her uneasiness."

He seemed more amazed still, and still more shocked at her duplicity than at her torture. "Good Heaven!" exclaimed he, "how am I to accomplish her wishes? What am I to do? How can I judge, if she will not confide in me, but thus for ever deceive me?"

She leaned, pale as death, on the shoulder of Miss Woodley, her eye fixed with apparent insensibility to all that was said, while he continued,—

"Heaven is my witness, if I knew—if I could conceive the

means how to make her happy, I would sacrifice my own happiness to hers."

"My Lord," said Miss Woodley, with a smile, "perhaps I may call upon you hereafter to fulfil your word."

He was totally ignorant what she meant; nor had he leisure, from the confusion of his thoughts, to reflect upon her meaning: he nevertheless replied, with warmth, "Do, you shall find I'll perform it. Do; I will faithfully perform it."

Though Miss Milner was conscious this declaration could not, in delicacy, be ever adduced against him, yet the fervent and solemn manner in which he made it cheered her spirits; and as persons enjoy the reflection of having in their possession some valuable gem, though they are determined never to use it, so she upon this promise was comforted, and grew better. She now lifted up her head, and leaned it on her hand, as she sat by the side of a table: still she did not speak, but seemed overcome with sorrow. As her situation became, however, less alarming, her guardian's pity and affright began to take the colour of resentment; and though he did not say so, he was, and looked, highly offended.

At this juncture Mr. Sandford entered. On beholding the present party, it required not his sagacity to see, at the first view, that they were all uneasy; but, instead of the sympathy this might have excited in some dispositions, Mr. Sandford, after casting a look at each of them, appeared in high spirits.

"You seem unhappy, my Lord," said he, with a smile.

"You do *not*, Mr. Sandford," Lord Elmwood replied.

"No, my Lord; nor would I, were I in your situation. What should make a man of sense out of temper but a worthy object!" and he looked at Miss Milner.

"There are no objects unworthy our care," replied Lord Elmwood.

"But there are objects on whom all care is fruitless, your Lordship will allow."

"I never yet despaired of any one, Mr. Sandford."

"And yet there are persons of whom it is presumption to entertain any hopes." And he looked again at Miss Milner.

"Does your head ache, Miss Milner?" asked her friend, seeing her hold it with her hand.

"Very much," returned she.

"Mr. Sandford," said Miss Woodley, "did you use all those drops Miss Milner gave you for a pain in the head?"

"Yes," answered he, "I did." But the question at that moment somewhat embarrassed him.

"And I hope you found benefit from them," said Miss Milner, with great kindness, as she rose from her seat, and walked slowly out of the room.

Though Miss Woodley followed her, so that Mr. Sandford was left alone with Lord Elmwood, and might have continued his unkind insinuations without one restraint, yet his lips were closed for the present. He looked down on the carpet—twitched himself upon his chair—and began to talk of the weather.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN the first transports of despair were past, Miss Milner suffered herself to be once more in hope. She found there were no other means to support her life; and, to her comfort, her friend was much less severe on the present occasion than she had expected. No engagement between mortals was, in Miss Woodley's opinion, binding like that entered into with Heaven; and whatever vows Lord Elmwood had possibly made to another, she justly supposed that no woman's love for him equalled Miss Milner's. It was prior to all others, that established her claim, at least, to contend for success; and, in a contention, what rival would not fall before her?

It was not difficult to guess who this rival was; or, if they were a little time in suspense, Miss Woodley soon arrived at the certainty, by enquiring of Mr. Sandford; who, unsuspecting why she asked, readily informed her that the intended Lady Elmwood was no other than Miss Fenton; and that the marriage would be solemnised as soon as the mourning for the late Lord Elmwood was over. This last intelligence made Miss Woodley shudder: she repeated it, however, to Miss Milner, word for word.

"Happy, happy woman!" exclaimed Miss Milner of Miss Fenton: "she has received the first fond impulse of his heart, and has had the transcendent happiness of teaching him to love!"

"By no means," returned Miss Woodley, finding no other suggestion likely to comfort her; "do not suppose that his marriage is the result of love: it is no more than a duty, a necessary arrangement; and this you may plainly see by the wife on whom he has fixed. Miss Fenton was thought a proper match for his cousin, and that same propriety has transferred her to him."

It was easy to convince Miss Milner that all which her friend said was truth, for she wished it so. "And, oh!" she exclaimed, "could I but stimulate passion, against the cold influence of propriety; do you think, my dear Miss Woodley"—and she looked with such begging eyes, it was impossible not to answer as she wished—"do you think it would be unjust to Miss Fenton, were I to inspire her appointed husband with a passion which she may not have inspired, and which I believe *she* cannot feel?"

Miss Woodley paused a minute, and then answered, "No;" but there was a hesitation in her manner of delivery: she *did* say "No;" but she looked as if she was afraid she ought to have said "Yes." Miss Milner, however, did not give her time to recall the word, or to alter its meaning by adding others, but ran on eagerly, and declared, "As that was her opinion, she would abide by it, and do all she could to supplant her rival." In order, nevertheless, to justify this determination, and satisfy the conscience of Miss Woodley, they both concluded that Miss Fenton's heart was not engaged in the intended marriage, and, consequently, that she was indifferent whether it ever took place or not.

Since the death of the late Earl, she had not been in town; nor had the present Earl been near the place where she resided, since the week in which her lover died: of course, nothing similar to love could have been declared at so early a period; and if it had been made known at a later, it must only have been by letter, or by the deputation of Mr. Sandford, who they knew had been once in the country to visit her; but how little he was qualified to enforce a tender passion was a comfortable reflection.

Revived by these conjectures, of which some were true, and

others false—the very next day a gloom overspread their bright prospects, on Mr. Sandford's saying, as he entered the breakfast-room,—

“Miss Fenton, ladies, desired me to present her compliments.”

“Is she in town?” asked Mrs. Horton.

“She came yesterday morning,” returned Sandford, “and is at her brother's in Ormond Street : my Lord and I supped there last night, and that made us so late home.”

Lord Elmwood entered soon after, and bowing to his ward, confirmed what had been said, by telling her, that “Miss Fenton had charged him with her kindest respects.”

“How does poor Miss Fenton look?” Mrs. Horton asked Lord Elmwood.

To which question Sandford replied, “Beautiful,—she looks beautifully.”

“She has got over her uneasiness, I suppose, then?” said Mrs. Horton, not dreaming that she was asking the question before her new lover.

“Uneasy!” replied Sandford : “uneasy at any trial this world can send? That would be highly unworthy of her.”

“But sometimes women do fret at such things,” replied Mrs. Horton, innocently.

Lord Elmwood asked Miss Milner, if she meant to ride this delightful day?

While she was hesitating,—

“There are different kinds of women,” said Sandford, directing his discourse to Mrs. Horton : “there is as much difference between some women, as between good and evil spirits.”

Lord Elmwood asked Miss Milner again, if she took an airing?

She replied, “No.”

“And beauty,” continued Sandford, “when endowed upon spirits that are evil, is a mark of their greater, their more extreme wickedness. Lucifer was the most beautiful of all the angels in paradise.”—

“How do you know?” said Miss Milner.

“But the beauty of Lucifer,” continued Sandford, in perfect neglect and contempt of her question, “was an aggravation of his

guilt ; because it showed a double share of ingratitude to the Divine Creator of that beauty."

"Now you talk of angels," said Miss Milner, "I wish I had wings ; and I should like to fly through the Park this morning."

"You would be taken for an angel in good earnest," said Lord Elmwood.

Sandford was angry at this little compliment, and cried,—
"I should think the serpent's skin would be much more characteristic."

"My Lord," cried she, "does not Mr. Sandford use me ill?" Vexed with other things, she felt herself extremely hurt at this, and made the appeal almost in tears.

"Indeed, I think he does." And he looked at Sandford as if he was displeased.

This was a triumph so agreeable to her, that she immediately pardoned the offence ; but the offender did not so easily pardon her.

"Good morning, ladies," said Lord Elmwood, rising to go away.

"My Lord," said Miss Woodley, "you promised Miss Milner to accompany her one evening to the opera : this is opera night."

"Will you go, my Lord?" asked Miss Milner, in a voice so soft, that he seemed as if he wished, but could not resist it.

"I am to dine at Mr. Fenton's to-day," he replied ; "and if he and his sister will go, and you will allow them part of your box, I will promise to come."

This was a condition by no means acceptable to her ; but as she felt a desire to see him in company with his intended bride (for she fancied she could perceive his secret sentiments, could she once see them together), she answered not ungraciously, "Yes, my compliments to Mr. and Miss Fenton, and I hope they will favour me with their company."

"Then, madam, if they come, you may expect me—else not." He bowed, and left the room.

All the day was passed in anxious expectation by Miss Milner, what would be the event of the evening ; for upon her penetra-

tion that evening all her future prospects she thought depended. If she saw by his looks, by his words, or assiduities, that he loved Miss Fenton, she flattered herself she would never think of him again with hope; but if she observed him treat her with inattention or indifference, she would cherish, from that moment, the fondest expectations. Against that short evening her toilet was consulted the whole day: the alternate hope and fear which fluttered in her heart gave a more than usual brilliancy to her eyes, and more than usual bloom to her complexion. But vain was her beauty; vain all her care to decorate that beauty; vain her many looks to her box-door in hopes to see it open—Lord Elmwood never came.

The music was discord; every thing she saw was distasteful: in a word, she was miserable.

She longed impatiently for the curtain to drop, because she was uneasy where she was: yet she asked herself, "Shall I be less unhappy at home? Yes; at home I shall see Lord Elmwood, and that will be happiness. But he will behold me with neglect, and that will be misery! Ungrateful man! I will no longer think of him." Yet could she have thought of him, without joining in the same idea Miss Fenton, her anguish had been supportable; but while she painted them as lovers, the tortures of the rack are not in many degrees more painful than these which she endured.

There are but few persons who ever felt the real passion of jealousy, because few have felt the real passion of love; but with those who have experienced them both, jealousy has not only affected the mind, but every fibre of their frame; and Miss Milner's every limb felt agonising torment, when Miss Fenton, courted and beloved by Lord Elmwood, was present to her imagination.

The moment the opera was finished, she flew hastily down stairs, as if to fly from the sufferings she experienced. She did not go into the coffee-room, though repeatedly urged by Miss Woodley, but waited at the door till her carriage drew up.

Piqued—heart-broken—full of resentment against the object of her uneasiness, and inattentive to all that passed, as she stood, a hand gently touched her own; and the most humble and insinuating voice said,—“Will you permit me to lead you to your carriage?” She was awakened from her reverie, and found

Lord Frederick Lawnley by her side. Her heart, just then melting with tenderness to another, was perhaps more accessible than heretofore; or, bursting with resentment, thought this the moment to retaliate. Whatever passion reigned that instant, it was favourable to the desires of Lord Frederick, and she looked as if she was glad to see him. He beheld this with the rapture and the humility of a lover: and though she did not feel the least particle of love in return, she felt gratitude in proportion to the insensibility with which she had been treated by her guardian; and Lord Frederick's supposition was not very erroneous, if he mistook this gratitude for a latent spark of affection. The mistake, however, did not force from him his respect: he handed her to her carriage, bowed low, and disappeared. Miss Woodley wished to divert her thoughts from the object which could only make her wretched; and as they rode home, by many encomiums upon Lord Frederick, endeavoured to incite her to a regard for him: Miss Milner was displeased at the attempt, and exclaimed,—

“What! love a rake, a man of professed gallantry! Impossible. To me a common rake is as odious as a common prostitute is to a man of the nicest feelings. Where can be the joy, the pride of inspiring a passion which fifty others can equally inspire?”

“Strange,” cried Miss Woodley, “that you, who possess so many follies incident to your sex, should, in the disposal of your heart, have sentiments so contrary to women in general.”

“My dear Miss Woodley,” returned she, “put in competition the languid addresses of a libertine, with the animated affection of a sober man, and judge which has the dominion. Oh! in my calendar of love, a solemn lord chief justice, or a devout archbishop, ranks before a licentious king.”

Miss Woodley smiled at an opinion which she knew half her sex would ridicule; but by the air of sincerity with which it was delivered, she was convinced her recent behaviour to Lord Frederick was but the mere effect of chance.

Lord Elmwood's carriage drove to his door just at the time hers did. Mr. Sandford was with him, and they were both come from passing the evening at Mr. Fenton's.

“So, my Lord,” said Miss Woodley, as soon as they met in the drawing-room, “you did not come to us?”

"No," answered he, "I was sorry ; but I hope you did not expect me."

"Not expect you, my Lord ?" cried Miss Milner. "Did not you say that you would come ?"

"If I had, I certainly should have come," returned he, "but I only said so conditionally."

"That I am a witness to," cried Sandford ; "for I was present at the time, and he said it should depend upon Miss Fenton."

"And she, with her gloomy disposition," said Miss Milner, "chose to sit at home."

"Gloomy disposition !" repeated Sandford : "she has a great share of sprightliness ; and I think I never saw her in better spirits than she was this evening, my Lord."

Lord Elmwood did not speak.

"Bless me, Mr. Sandford," cried Miss Milner, "I meant no reflection upon Miss Fenton's disposition ; I only meant to censure her taste for staying at home."

"I think," replied Sandford, "a much heavier censure should be passed upon those who prefer rambling abroad."

"But I hope, ladies, my not coming," said Lord Elmwood, "was no inconvenience to you ; for you had still, I see, a gentleman with you."

"Oh, yes, two gentlemen," answered the son of Lady Evans, a youth from school, whom Miss Milner had taken along with her.

"What two?" asked Lord Elmwood.

Neither Miss Milner nor Miss Woodley answered.

"You know, madam," said young Evans, "that handsome gentleman who handed you into your carriage, and you called my Lord."

"Oh! he means Lord Frederick Lawnley," said Miss Milner carelessly, but a blush of shame spread over her face.

"And did he hand you into your coach?" asked Lord Elmwood earnestly.

"By mere accident, my Lord," Miss Woodley replied ; "for the crowd was so great——"

"I think, my Lord," said Sandford, "it was very lucky that you were *not* there."

"Had Lord Elmwood been with us, we should not have had occasion for the assistance of any other," said Miss Milner.

"Lord Elmwood has been with you, madam," returned Sandford, "very frequently, and yet——"

"Mr. Sandford," said Lord Elmwood, interrupting him, "it is near bedtime : your conversation keeps the ladies from retiring."

"Your Lordship's does not," said Miss Milner, "for you say nothing."

"Because, madam, I am afraid to offend."

"But do not you also hope to please? and without risking the one, it is impossible to arrive at the other."

"I think, at present, the risk would be too hazardous; and so I wish you a good night." And he went out of the room somewhat abruptly.

"Lord Elmwood," said Miss Milner, "is very grave : he does not look like a man who has been passing the evening with the woman he loves."

"Perhaps he is melancholy at parting from her," said Miss Woodley.

"More likely offended," said Sandford, "at the manner in which that lady has spoken of her."

"Who, I? I protest I said nothing——"

"Nothing! Did not you say that she was gloomy?"

"Nothing but what I thought, I was going to add, Mr. Sandford."

"When you think unjustly, you should not express your thoughts."

"Then, perhaps, I should never speak."

"And it were better you did not, if what you say is to give pain. Do you know, madam, that my Lord is going to be married to Miss Fenton?"

"Yes," answered Miss Milner.

"Do you know that he loves her?"

"No," answered Miss Milner.

"How! do you suppose he does not?"

"I suppose that he does, yet I don't know it."

"Then if you suppose that he does, how can you have the imprudence to find fault with her in his presence?"

"I did not. To call her gloomy was, I knew, to commend her both to him and to you, who admire such tempers."

"Whatever her temper is, *every one* admires it; and so far from its being what you have described, she has great vivacity; vivacity which comes from the heart."

"No; if it *came* from thence, I should admire it too; but if she has any, it *rests* there, and no one is the better for it."

"Pshaw!" said Miss Woodley, "it is time for us to retire; you and Mr. Sandford must finish your dispute in the morning."

"Dispute, madam!" said Sandford; "I never disputed with any one beneath a doctor of divinity in my life. I was only cautioning your friend not to make light of those virtues, which it would do her honour to possess. Miss Fenton is a most amiable young woman, and worthy of just such a husband as my Lord Elmwood will make her."

"I am sure," said Miss Woodley, "Miss Milner thinks so: she has a high opinion of Miss Fenton; she was at present only jesting."

"But, madam, a jest is a very pernicious thing, when delivered with a malignant sneer. I have known a jest destroy a lady's reputation: I have known a jest give one person a distaste for another: I have known a jest break off a marriage."

"But I suppose there is no apprehension of that in the present case?" said Miss Woodley, wishing he might answer in the affirmative.

"Not that I can foresee. No, Heaven forbid," he replied; "for I look upon them to be formed for each other; their dispositions, their pursuits, their inclinations the same: their passions for each other just the same; pure, white as snow."

"And, I dare say, not warmer," replied Miss Milner.

He looked provoked beyond measure.

"My dear," cried Miss Woodley, "how can you talk thus? I believe, in my heart, you are only envious, because my Lord Elmwood has not offered himself to you."

"To her!" said Sandford, affecting an air of the utmost surprise; "to her! Do you think he received a dispensation from his vows to become the husband of a coquette—a——" He was going on.

"Nay, Mr. Sandford," cried Miss Milner, "I believe, after all, my worst crime, in your eyes, is that of being a heretic."

"By no means: it is the only circumstance that can apologise for your faults; and if you had not that excuse, there would be none for you."

"Then, at present, there *is* an excuse: I thank you, Mr. Sandford: this is the kindest thing you ever said to me. But I am vexed to see that you are sorry for having said it."

"Angry at your being a heretic!" he resumed—"Indeed, I should be much more concerned to see you a disgrace to our religion."

Miss Milner had not been in a good humour the whole evening: she had been provoked several times to the full extent of her patience: but this harsh sentence hurried her beyond all bounds, and she arose from her seat in the most violent agitation, exclaiming, "What have I done to be thus treated?"

Though Mr. Sandford was not a man easily intimidated, he was upon this occasion evidently alarmed; and stared about him with so violent an expression of surprise, that it partook, in some degree, of fear. Miss Woodley clasped her friend in her arms, and cried with the tenderest affection and pity, "My dear Miss Milner, be composed."

Miss Milner sat down, and *was* so for a minute; but her dead silence was almost as alarming to Sandford as her rage had been; and he did not perfectly recover himself till he saw tears pouring down her face. He then heaved a sigh of content that all had thus ended; but in his heart resolved never to forget the ridiculous affright into which he had been thrown. He stole out of the room without uttering a syllable: but as he never retired to rest before he had repeated a long form of evening prayer, when this evening he came to that part which supplicates "grace for the wicked," he took care to mention Miss Milner's name with the most fervent devotion.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of the many restless nights that Miss Milner passed this was not one. It is true she had a weight of care upon her heart, even heavier than usual, but the burden had overcome her strength. Wearied out with hopes, with fears, and, at the end, with disappointment and rage, she sunk at once into a deep slumber. But the more forgetfulness had then prevailed, the more powerful was the force of remembrance when she awoke. At first, so sound her sleep had been, that she had a difficulty in calling to mind why she was unhappy; but that she *was* unhappy she well recollected. When the cause came to her memory, she would have slept again; but it was impossible.

Though her rest had been unbroken, it had not been refreshing; she was far from well, and sent word of her indisposition, as an apology for not being present at breakfast. Lord Elmwood looked concerned when the message was delivered: Mr. Sandford shook his head.

"Miss Milner's health is not good!" said Mrs. Horton, a few minutes after.

Lord Elmwood laid down the newspaper to attend to what she said.

"To me there is something very extraordinary about her!" continued Mrs. Horton, finding she had caught his Lordship's attention.

"So there is to me!" added Sandford, with a sarcastic sneer.

"And so there is to me!" said Miss Woodley, with a serious face and a heartfelt sigh.

Lord Elmwood gazed by turns at each, as each delivered their sentiments; and when they were all silent, he looked bewildered, not knowing what judgment to form from any one of these sentences.

Soon after breakfast, Mr. Sandford withdrew to his own

apartment : Mrs. Horton, in a little time, went to hers : Lord Elmwood and Miss Woodley were left alone. He immediately rose from his seat, and said,—

“I think, Miss Woodley, Miss Milner was extremely to blame, though I did not choose to tell her so before Mr. Sandford, in giving Lord Frederick an opportunity of speaking to her, unless she means that he shall renew his addresses.”

“That, I am certain,” replied Miss Woodley, “she does *not* mean ; and I assure you, my Lord, seriously, it was by mere accident she saw him yesterday evening, or permitted his attendance upon her to her carriage.”

“I am glad to hear it,” he returned quickly ; “for although I am not of a suspicious nature, yet in regard to her affection for him, I cannot but still have my doubts.”

“You need have none, my Lord,” replied Miss Woodley, with a smile of confidence.

“And yet you must own her behaviour has warranted them. Has it not been, in this particular, incoherent and unaccountable ?”

“The behaviour of a person in love, no doubt,” answered Miss Woodley.

“Don’t I say so ?” replied he, warmly ; “and is not that a just reason for my suspicions ?”

“But is there only one man in the world on whom those suspicions can fix ?” said Miss Woodley, with the colour mounting into her face.

“Not that I know of—not one more that I know of,” he replied, with astonishment at what she had insinuated, and yet with a perfect assurance that she was in the wrong.

“Perhaps I am mistaken,” answered she.

“Nay, that is impossible too,” returned he, with anxiety. “You share her confidence—you are perpetually with her ; and for that reason, even if she did not confide in you (which I know and rejoice that she does), you would yet be acquainted with all her inclinations.”

“I believe I am *perfectly* acquainted with them,” replied Miss Woodley, with a significance in her voice and manner which convinced him there was some secret to learn.

After a hesitation,—

“It is far from me,” replied he, “to wish to be intrusted with

the private sentiments of those who desire to withhold them from me; much less would I take any unfair means to be informed. To ask any more questions of you, I believe, would be unfair. Yet I cannot but lament that I am not as well instructed as you are. I wish to prove my friendship to Miss Milner, but she will not suffer me; and every step that I take for her happiness, I take in the most perplexing uncertainty."

Miss Woodley sighed—but she did not speak. He seemed to wait for her reply; but as she made none, he proceeded,—

"If ever breach of confidence could be tolerated, I certainly know no occasion that would so justly authorise it as the present. I am not only proper from character, but from circumstances, to be relied upon: my interest is so nearly connected with the interest, and my happiness with the happiness of my ward, that those principles, as well as my honour, would protect her against every peril arising from my being trusted."

"Oh, my Lord," cried Miss Woodley, with a most forcible accent, "*you* are the last person on earth she would pardon me for intrusting."

"Why so?" said he, warmly. "But that is the way—the person who is our friend we distrust: where a common interest is concerned, we are ashamed of drawing on a common danger—afraid of advice, though that advice is to preserve us. Miss Woodley," said he, changing his voice with excess of earnestness, "do you not believe that I would do any thing to make Miss Milner happy?"

"Any thing, in honour, my Lord."

"She can desire nothing further," he replied, in agitation. "Are her desires so unwarrantable that I cannot grant them?"

Miss Woodley again did not speak—and he continued,—

"Great as my friendship is, there are certainly bounds to it: bounds that shall save her in spite of herself;" and he raised his voice.

"In the disposal of themselves," resumed he, with a less vehement tone, "that great, that terrific disposal in marriage (at which I have always looked with fear and dismay), there is no accounting for the rashness of a woman's choice, or sometimes for the depravity of her taste. But in such a case, Miss Milner's election of a husband shall not direct mine. If she does not know how to estimate her own value, I do. Independ-

dent of her fortune, she has beauty to captivate the heart of any man ; with all her follies, she has a frankness in her manner, an unaffected wisdom in her thoughts, a vivacity in her conversation, and, withal, a softness in her demeanour, that might alone engage the affections of a man of the nicest sentiments, and the strongest understanding. I will not see all these qualities and accomplishments debased. It is my office to protect her from the consequences of a degrading choice, and I will execute the obligation."

"My Lord, Miss Milner's taste is not a depraved one: it is but too refined."

"What can you mean by that, Miss Woodley? You talk mysteriously. Is she not afraid that I will oppose her inclinations?"

"She is *sure* that you will, my Lord."

"Then the person must be unworthy of her."

Miss Woodley rose from her seat—she clasped her hands—every look and every gesture proved her alternate resolution and irresolution to proceed farther. Lord Elmwood's attention was arrested before; but now it was fixed to a degree of curiosity and surprise, which her extraordinary manner could only have excited.

"My Lord," said she, with a tremulous voice, "promise me, declare to me, nay, swear to me, that it shall ever remain a secret in your own breast, and I will reveal to you on whom she has placed her affections."

This preparation made Lord Elmwood tremble; and he ran over instantly in his mind all the persons he could recollect, in order to arrive at the knowledge by thought, quicker than by words. It was in vain he tried; and he once more turned his enquiring eyes upon Miss Woodley. He saw her silent and covered with confusion. Again he searched his own thoughts; nor ineffectually as before. At the first glance the object was presented, and he beheld—*himself*.

The rapid emotion of varying passions, which immediately darted over his features, informed Miss Woodley that her secret was discovered. She hid her face, while the tears that fell down to her bosom confirmed the truth of his mind's suggestion, more forcibly than oaths could have done. A short interval of silence followed, during which she suffered tortures for the

manner in which he would next address her. A few seconds gave her this reply:—

“For God’s sake, take care what you are doing: you are destroying my prospects of futurity—you are making this world too dear to me.”

Her drooping head was then lifted up, and she caught the eye of Dorriforth: she saw it beam expectation, amazement, joy, ardour, and love. Nay, there was a fire, a vehemence in the quick fascinating rays it sent forth, she never before had seen. It filled her with alarm: she wished him to love Miss Milner, but to love her with moderation. Miss Woodley was too little versed in the subject to know this would have been not to love at all; at least not to the extent of breaking through engagements, and all the various obstacles that still militated against their union.

Lord Elnwood was sensible of the embarrassment his presence gave Miss Woodley, and understood the reproaches which she seemed to vent upon herself in silence. To relieve her from both, he laid his hand with force upon his heart, and said: “Do you believe me?”

“I do, my Lord,” she answered, trembling.

“I will make no unjust use of what I know,” he replied with firmness.

“I believe you, my Lord.”

“But for what my passions now dictate,” continued he, “I will not hereafter answer. They are confused—they are triumphant at present. I have never yet, however, been vanquished by them; and even upon this occasion, my reason shall combat them to the last—and my reason shall fail me, before I act dishonourably.”

He was going to leave the room; she followed him, and cried, “But, my Lord, how shall I see again the unhappy object of my treachery?”

“See her,” replied he, “as one to whom you meant no injury, and to whom you have done none.”

“But she would account it an injury.”

“We are not judges of what belongs to ourselves,” he replied: “I am transported at the tidings you have revealed; and yet, perhaps, it had been better if I had never heard them.”

Miss Woodley was going to say something further ; but, as if incapable of attending to her, he hastened out of the room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MISS WOODLEY stood for some time to consider which way she was to go. The first person she met would enquire why she had been weeping ; and if Miss Milner was to ask the question, in what words could she tell, or in what manner deny the truth ? To avoid her was her first caution, and she took the only method : she had a hackney coach ordered, rode several miles out of town, and returned to dinner with so little remains of her swollen eyes, that complaining of the headache was a sufficient excuse for them.

Miss Milner was enough recovered to be present at dinner, though she hardly tasted a morsel. Lord Elmwood did not dine at home, at which Miss Woodley rejoiced, but at which Mr. Sandford appeared highly disappointed. He asked the servants several times what my Lord said when he went out ? They replied, "Nothing more than that he should not be at home to dinner."—"I can't imagine where he dines ?" said Sandford.—"Bless me, Mr. Sandford, can't you guess ?" cried Mrs. Horton, who by this time was made acquainted with his intended marriage, "he dines with Miss Fenton, to be sure."—"No," replied Sandford, "he is not there : I came from thence just now, and they had not seen him all day." Poor Miss Milner, on this, began to eat a little ; for where we hope for nothing, we receive small indulgencies with joy.

Notwithstanding the anxiety and trouble under which Miss Woodley had laboured all the morning, her heart for many weeks had not felt so light as it did this day at dinner. The confidence that she reposed in the premises of Lord Elmwood ; the firm reliance she had upon his delicacy and his justice ; the unabated kindness with which her friend received her, while she knew that no one suspicious thought had taken har-

bour in her bosom ; and the conscious integrity of her own intentions, though she might have been misled by her judgment, all comforted her with the hope she had done nothing she ought to wish recalled. But although she felt thus tranquil, in respect to what she had divulged, yet she was a good deal disquieted with the dread of next seeing Lord Elmwood.

Miss Milner, not having spirits to go abroad, passed the evening at home. She read part of a new opera, played upon her harp, mused, sighed, occasionally talked with Miss Woodley, and so passed the tedious hours till near ten, when Mrs. Horton asked Mr. Sandford to play a game at piquet, and on his excusing himself, Miss Milner offered in his stead, and was gladly accepted. They had just begun to play when Lord Elmwood came into the room. Miss Milner's countenance immediately brightened ; and though she was in a negligent morning dress, and looked paler than usual, she did not look less beautiful. Miss Woodley was leaning on the back of her chair to observe the game, and Mr. Sandford sat reading one of the fathers at the other side of the fire-place. Lord Elmwood, as he advanced to the table, bowed, not having seen the ladies since the morning, nor Miss Milner that day : they returned the salute, and he was going up to Miss Milner (as if to enquire of her health), when Mr. Sandford, laying down his book, said,—

“ My Lord, where have you been all day ? ”

“ I have been very busy,” replied he, and walking from the card-table, went up to him.

Miss Milner played one card for another.

“ You have been at Mr. Fenton's this evening, I suppose ? ” said Sandford.

“ No ; not at all to-day.”

“ How came that about, my Lord ? ”

Miss Milner played the ace of diamonds, instead of the king of hearts.

“ I shall call to-morrow,” answered Lord Elmwood ; and then walking with a very ceremonious air up to Miss Milner, said, “ he hoped she was perfectly recovered.”

Mrs. Horton begged her “ to mind what she was about.”

She replied, “ I am much better, sir.”

He then returned to Sandford again : but never, during all

this time, did his eye once encounter Miss Woodley's ; and she, with equal care, avoided his.

Some cold dishes were now brought up for supper ; Miss Milner lost her deal, and the game ended.

As they were arranging themselves at the supper-table, " Do, Miss Milner," said Mrs. Horton, " have something warm for your supper ; a chicken boiled, or something of that kind : you have eaten nothing to-day."

With feelings of humanity, and apparently no other sensation,—but never did he feel his philanthropy so forcible,—Lord Elmwood said, " Let me beg of you, Miss Milner, to have something provided for you."

The earnestness and emphasis with which these few words were pronounced, were more flattering than the finest turned compliment would have been : her gratitude was expressed in blushes, and by assuring him she was now " so well as to sup on the provisions before her." She spoke, however, and had not made the trial ; for the moment she carried a morsel to her lips, she laid it on her plate again, and turned paler, from the vain endeavour to force her appetite. Lord Elmwood had always been attentive to her, but now he watched her as he would a child ; and when he saw by her struggles that she could not eat, he took her plate from her, gave her something else, and all with a care and watchfulness in his looks, as if he had been a tender-hearted boy, and she his darling bird, the loss of which would embitter all the joy of his holidays.

This attention had something in it so tender, so officious, and yet so sincere, that it brought the tears into Miss Woodley's eyes, attracted the notice of Mr. Sandford, and the observation of Mrs. Horton ; while the heart of Miss Milner overflowed with a gratitude that gave place to no sentiment except her love.

To relieve the anxiety which her guardian expressed, she endeavoured to appear cheerful ; and that anxiety, at length, really made her so. He now pressed her to take one glass of wine with such solicitude, that he seemed to say a thousand things besides. Sandford still made his observations ; and being unused to conceal his thoughts before the present company, he said bluntly,—

" Miss Fenton was indisposed the other night, my Lord, and you did not seem half thus anxious about her."

Had Sandford laid all Lord Elmwood's estate at Miss Milner's feet, or presented her with that eternal bloom which adorns the face of a goddess, he would have done less to endear himself to her, than by this one sentence : she looked at him with a most benign countenance, and felt affliction that she had ever offended him.

"Miss Fenton," Lord Elmwood replied, "has a brother with her : her health and happiness are in *his* care;—Miss Milner's are in mine."

"Mr. Sandford," said Miss Milner, "I am afraid that I behaved uncivilly to you last night; will you accept of an atonement?"

"No, madam," returned he : "I accept no expiation without amendment."

"Well, then," said she, smiling, "suppose I promise never to offend you again,—what then?"

"Why, then, you'll break your promise."

"Do not promise him," said Lord Elmwood, "for he means to provoke you to it."

In the like conversation the evening passed, and Miss Milner retired to rest in far better spirits than her morning's prospect had given her the least pretence to hope. Miss Woodley, too, had cause to be well pleased; but her pleasure was in great measure eclipsed by the reflection, that there was such a person as Miss Fenton. She wished she had been equally acquainted with hers as with Miss Milner's heart, and she would then have acted without injustice to either; but Miss Fenton had of late shunned their society, and even in their company was of a temper too reserved ever to discover her mind. Miss Woodley was obliged, therefore, to act to the best of her own judgment only, and leave all events to Providence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WITHIN a few weeks, in the house of Lord Elmwood, every thing, and every person, wore a new face. He was the professed lover of Miss Milner—she the happiest of human beings; Miss Woodley partaking in the joy—Mr. Sandford lamenting, with the deepest concern, that Miss Fenton had been supplanted: and what added poignantly to his concern was, that she had been supplanted by Miss Milner. Though a churchman, he bore his disappointment with the impatience of one of the laity: he could hardly speak to Lord Elmwood; he would not look at Miss Milner, and was displeased with every one. It was his intention, when he first became acquainted with Lord Elmwood's resolution, to quit his house; and as the Earl had, with the utmost degree of inflexibility, resisted all his good counsel upon this subject, he resolved, in quitting him, never to be his adviser again. But, in preparing to leave his friend, his pupil, his patron, and yet him, who, upon most occasions, implicitly obeyed his will, the spiritual got the better of the temporal man, and he determined to stay, lest, in totally abandoning him to the pursuit of his own passions, he should make his punishment even greater than his offence. "My Lord," said he, "on the stormy sea upon which you are embarked, though you will not shun the rocks that your faithful pilot would point out, he will nevertheless, sail in your company, and lament over your watery grave. The more you slight my advice, the more you require it, so that, until you command me to leave your house (as I suppose you will soon do, to oblige your lady), I will continue along with you."

Lord Elmwood liked him sincerely, and was glad that he took this resolution; yet as soon as his reason and affections had once told him that he ought to break with Miss Fenton, and marry his ward, he became so decidedly of this opinion, that Sandford's never had the most trivial weight: nor would he even

flatter the supposed authority he possessed over him, by urging him to remain in his house a single day contrary to his inclinations. Sandford observed, with grief, this firmness ; but finding it vain to contend, submitted—not, however, with a good grace.

Amidst all the persons affected by this change in Lord Elmwood's marriage-designs, Miss Fenton was, perhaps, affected the least : she would have been content to have married—she was content to live single. Mr. Sandford had been the first who made overtures to her on the part of Lord Elmwood, and was the first sent to ask her to dispense with the obligation. She received both of these proposals with the same insipid smile of approbation, and the same cold indifference at the heart.

It was a perfect knowledge of this disposition in his intended wife, which had given to Lord Elmwood's thoughts on matrimony the idea of dreary winter ; but the sensibility of Miss Milner had now reserved that prospect into perpetual spring, or the dearer variety of spring, summer, and autumn.

It was a knowledge, also, of this torpor in Miss Fenton's nature from which he formed the purpose of breaking with her ; for Lord Elmwood still retained enough of the sanctity of his former state to have yielded up his own happiness, and even that of his beloved ward, rather than have plunged one heart into affliction by his perfidy. This, before he offered his hand to Miss Milner, he was perfectly convinced would not be the case : even Miss Fenton herself assured him, that her thoughts were more upon the joys of heaven than upon those of earth ; and as this circumstance would, she believed, induce her to retire into a convent, she considered it a happy rather than an unhappy event. Her brother, on whom her fortune devolved, if she took this holy resolution, was exactly of her opinion.

Lost in the maze of happiness that surrounded her, Miss Milner oftentimes asked her heart, and her heart whispered like a flatterer, "Yes," "Are not my charms even more invincible than I ever believed them to be ?" Dorriforth, the grave, the pious, the anchorite Dorriforth, by their force, is animated to all the ardour of the most impassioned lover ; while the proud priest, the austere guardian, is humbled, if I but frown, into the veriest slave of love." She then asked, "Why did I not keep him longer in suspense ? He could not have loved me more, I

believe, but my power over him might have been greater still. I am the happiest of women in the affection he has proved to me, but I wonder whether it would exist under ill treatment? If it would not, he still does not love me as I wish to be loved—if it would, my triumph, my felicity, would be enhanced." These thoughts were mere phantoms of the brain, and never, by system, put into action; but, repeatedly indulged, they were practised by casual occurrences; and the dear-bought experiment of being loved in spite of her faults (a glory proud women ever aspire to) was, at present, the ambition of Miss Milner.

Unthinking woman! she did not reflect, that to the searching eye of Lord Elmwood she had faults, with her utmost care to conceal or overcome them, sufficient to try all his love, and all his patience. But what female is not fond of experiments? To which, how few there are that do not fall a sacrifice!

Perfectly secure in the affections of the man she loved, her declining health no longer threatened her; her declining spirits returned as before; and the suspicions of her guardian being now changed to the liberal confidence of a doting lover, she again professed all her former follies, all her fashionable levities, and indulged them with less restraint than ever.

For a while, blinded by his passion, Lord Elmwood encouraged and admired every new proof of her restored happiness; nor, till sufferance had tempted her beyond her usual bounds, did he remonstrate. But she who, as his ward, had been ever gentle, and (when he strenuously opposed) always obedient, became, as a mistress, sometimes haughty, and to opposition always insolent. He was surprised, but the novelty pleased him. And Miss Milner, whom he tenderly loved, could put on no change, or appear in no new character, that did not, for the time she adopted it, seem to become her.

Among the many causes of complaint which she gave him, want of economy in the disposal of her income was one. Bills and drafts came upon him without number, while the account, on her part, of money expended, amounted chiefly to articles of dress that she sometimes never wore, toys that were out of fashion before they were paid for, and charities directed by the force of whim. Another complaint was, as usual, extreme late hours, and often company that he did not approve.

She was charmed to see his love struggling with his censure,

his politeness with his anxiety; and, by the light, frivolous, or resentful manner in which she treated his admonitions, she triumphed in showing to Miss Woodley, and, more especially to Mr. Sandford, how much she dared upon the strength of his affections.

Every thing in preparation for their marriage, which was to take place at Elmwood House during the summer months, she resolved, for the short time she had to remain in London, to let no occasion pass of tasting all those pleasures that were not likely ever to return, but which, though eager as she was in their pursuit, she never placed in competition with those she hoped would succeed—those more sedate and superior joys of domestic and conjugal happiness. Often, merely to hasten on the tedious hours that intervened, she varied and diverted them with the many recreations her intended husband could not approve.

It so happened, and it was unfortunate it did, that a law-suit concerning some possessions in the West Indies, and other intricate affairs that came with his title and estate, frequently kept Lord Elmwood from his house part of the day; sometimes the whole evening; and, when at home, would often closet him for hours with his lawyers. But while he was thus off his guard, Sandford never was so; and had Miss Milner been the dearest thing on earth to him, he could not have watched her more vigilantly; or had she been the frailest thing on earth, he could not have been more hard upon her, in all the accounts of her conduct he gave to her guardian. Lord Elmwood knew, on the other hand, that Sandford's failing was to think ill of Miss Milner: he pitied him for it, and he pitied her for it; and in all the aggravation which his representations gave to her real follies, affection for them both, in the heart of Dorrisforth, stood between accusation and every other unfavourable impression.

But facts are glaring; and he, at length, beheld those faults in their true colours, though previously pointed out by the prejudice of Mr. Sandford.

As soon as Sandford perceived his friend's confutation and uneasiness, "There, my Lord!" cried he, exultingly, "did I not always say the marriage was an improper one? But you would not be ruled—you would not see."

"My Lord," said she, "I have had a very agreeable morning ; but I wished for you : if you had been with me, I should have bought a great many other things ; but I did not like to appear unreasonable in your absence."

Sandford fixed his inquisitive eyes upon Lord Elmwood, to observe his countenance : he smiled, but appeared thoughtful.

"And oh ! my Lord, I have bought you a present," said she.

"I do not wish for a present, Miss Milner."

"What ! not from me ?—Very well."

"If you present me with yourself, it is all that I ask."

Sandford moved upon his chair, as if he sat uneasy.

"Why, then, Miss Woodley," said Miss Milner, "*you* shall have the present. But then it won't suit you—it is for a gentleman. I'll keep it and give it to my Lord Frederick the first time I meet with him. I saw him this morning, and he looked divinely : I longed to speak to him."

Miss Woodley cast, by stealth, an eye of apprehension upon Lord Elmwood's face, and trembled at seeing it flushed with resentment.

Sandford stared with both his eyes full upon him ; then drew himself upright on his chair, and took a pinch of snuff upon the strength of the Earl's uneasiness.

A silence ensued.

After a short time—"You all appear melancholy," said Miss Milner : "I wish I had not come home yet."

Miss Woodley was in agony : she saw Lord Elmwood's extreme displeasure, and dreaded lest he should express it by some words he could not recall, or she could not forgive : therefore, whispering to her she had something particular to say, she took her out of the room.

The moment she was gone, Mr. Sandford rose nimbly from his seat, rubbed his hands, walked briskly across the room, then asked Lord Elmwood, in a cheerful tone, "whether he dined at home to-day?"

That which had given Sandford cheerfulness had so depressed Lord Elmwood that he sat dejected and silent. At length he answered in a faint voice, "No ; I believe I shall *not* dine at home."

"Where is your Lordship going to dine?" asked Mrs. Hor-

ton: "I thought we should have had your company to-day: Miss Milner dines at home, I believe."

"I have not yet determined where I shall dine," replied he, taking no notice of the conclusion of her speech.

"My Lord, if you mean to go to the hotel, I'll go with you, if you please," cried Sandford, officiously.

"With all my heart, Sandford"—and they both went out together, before Miss Milner returned to the apartment.

CHAPTER XXV.

MISS WOODLEY, for the first time, disobeyed the will of Mr. Sandford; and as soon as Miss Milner and she were alone, repeated all he had revealed to her; accompanying the recital with her usual testimonies of sympathy and affection. But had the genius of Sandford presided over this discovery, it could not have influenced the mind of Miss Milner to receive the intelligence with a temper more exactly the opposite of that which it was the intention of the informer to recommend. Instead of shuddering at the menace Lord Elmwood had uttered, she said, she "dared him to perform it. He dares not," repeated she.

"Why dares not?" said Miss Woodley.

"Because he loves me too well—because his own happiness is too dear to him.

"I believe he loves you," replied Miss Woodley, "and yet there is a doubt if——"

"There shall be no longer a doubt," cried Miss Milner, "I'll put him to the proof."

"For shame, my dear! you talk inconsiderately: what can you mean by proof?"

"I mean I will do something that no prudent man *ought* to forgive; and yet, with all his vast share of prudence, *he* shall forgive it, and make a sacrifice of just resentment to partial affection."

"But if you should be disappointed, and he should *not* make the sacrifice?" said Miss Woodley.

"Then I have only lost a man who had no regard for me."

"He may have a great regard for you, notwithstanding."

"But for the love I have felt, and do still feel, for my Lord Elmwood, I will have something more than a *great regard* in return."

"You have his love, I am sure."

"But is it such as mine?—*I* could love *him* if he had a thousand faults. And yet," said she, recollecting herself—"and yet I believe his being faultless was the first cause of my passion."

Thus she talked on—sometimes in anger, sometimes apparently in jest—till her servant came to let her know the dinner was served. Upon entering the dining-room, and seeing Lord Elmwood's place at table vacant, she started back. She was disappointed of the pleasure she expected in dining with him; and his sudden absence, so immediately after the intelligence that she had received from Miss Woodley, increased her disquietude. She drew her chair, and sat down with an indifference that predicted she should not eat; and as soon as she was seated, she placed her fingers sullenly upon her lips, nor touched her knife and fork, nor spoke a word in reply to any thing that was said to her during the whole dinner. Miss Woodley and Mrs. Horton were both too well acquainted with the good disposition of her heart, to take offence, or appear to notice this behaviour. They dined, and said nothing either to provoke or soothe her. Just as the dinner was going to be removed, a loud rap came at the door. "Who is that?" said Mrs. Horton. One of the servants went to the window, and answered, "My Lord and Mr. Sandford, madam."

"Come back to dinner, as I live!" cried Mrs. Horton,

Miss Milner continued her position, and said nothing; but at the corners of her mouth, which her fingers did not entirely conceal, there were discoverable a thousand dimpled graces like small convulsive fibres, which a restrained smile upon Lord Elmwood's return had sent them.

Lord Elmwood and Sandford entered.

"I am glad you are returned, my Lord," said Mrs. Horton, "for Miss Milner has not tasted of one thing!"

"It was only because I had no appetite," returned she, blushing like crimson.

"We should not have come back," said Sandford, "but at

the place where we went to dine, all the rooms were filled with company."

Lord Elmwood put the wing of a fowl on Miss Milner's plate, but without previously asking if she chose any; yet she condescended to eat: they spoke to each other, too, in the course of conversation, but it was with a reserve that appeared as if they had been quarrelling, and felt so to themselves, though no such circumstance had happened.

Two weeks passed away in this kind of distant behaviour on both sides, without either of them venturing a direct quarrel, and without either of them expressing, except inadvertently, their strong affection for each other.

During this time they were once, however, very near becoming the dearest friends in expression as well as in sentiment. This arose from a favour that he granted, in compliance with her desire, though that desire had not been urged, but merely insinuated; and as it was a favour which he had refused to the repeated requests of many of his friends, the value of the obligation was heightened.

She and Miss Woodley had taken an airing to see the poor child, young Rushbrook. Lord Elmwood enquiring of the ladies how they had passed their morning, Miss Milner frankly told him, and added, what pain it gave her to leave the child behind, as he had again cried to come away with her.

"Go for him, then, to-morrow," said Lord Elmwood, "and bring him home."

"Home!" she repeated with surprise.

"Yes," replied he: "if you desire it, this shall be his home: you shall be a mother, and I will, henceforward, be a father to him."

Sandford, who was present, looked unusually sour at this high token of regard for Miss Milner; yet, with resentment on his face, he wiped a tear of joy from his eye, for the boy's sake. His frown was the force of prejudice, his tear the force of nature.

Rushbrook was brought home; and whenever Lord Elmwood wished to show a kindness to Miss Milner, without directing it immediately to her, he took his nephew upon his knee; talked to him, and told him, he "was glad they had become acquainted."

In the various, though delicate, struggles for power between Miss Milner and her guardian, there was not one person a witness to these incidents who did not suppose that all would at last end in wedlock: for the most common observer perceived that ardent love was the foundation of every discontent, as well as of every joy they experienced. One great incident, however, totally reversed the hope of all future accommodation.

The fashionable Lady G—— gave a masked ball. Tickets were presented to persons of quality and fashion: among the rest, three were sent to Miss Milner. She had never been at a masquerade, and received them with ecstasy; the more especially as, the mask being at the house of a woman of fashion, she did not conceive there could be any objection to her going. She was mistaken: the moment she mentioned it to Lord Elmwood, he desired her, somewhat sternly, “not to think of being there.”—She was vexed at the prohibition, but more at the manner in which it was delivered, and boldly said, that “she should certainly go.”

She expected a rebuke for this; but what alarmed her much more, he said not a word: but he looked with a resignation, which foreboded her greater sorrow than the severest reproaches would have done. She sat for a minute, reflecting how to rouse him from this composure: she first thought of attacking him with upbraidings; then she thought of soothing him, and at last of laughing at him. This was the most dangerous method of all, and yet this she ventured upon.

“I am sure your Lordship,” said she, “with all your saintliness, can have no objection to my being present at the masquerade, if I go as a nun.”

He made no reply.

“That is a habit,” continued she, “which covers a multitude of faults; and, for that evening, I may have the chance of making a conquest even of you—nay, I question not, if, under that inviting attire, even the pious Mr. Sandford would not ogle me.”

“Hush!” said Miss Woodley.

“Why hush?” cried Miss Milner, aloud, though Miss Woodley had spoken in a whisper. “I am sure,” continued she, “I am only repeating what I have read in books about nuns and their confessors.”

"Your conduct, Miss Milner," replied Lord Elmwood, "gives evident proofs of the authors you have read : you may spare yourself the trouble of quoting them."

Her pride was hurt at this, beyond bearing ; and as she could not, like him, govern her anger, it flushed in her face, and almost forced her to tears.

"My Lord," said Miss Woodley, in a tone so soft and peaceful that it might have calmed the resentment of both,—"my Lord, suppose you were to accompany Miss Milner? There are tickets for three, and you can then have no objection."

Miss Milner's brow was immediately smoothed ; and she fetched a sigh, in anxious expectation that he would consent.

"I go, Miss Woodley!" he replied, with astonishment. "Do you imagine I would play the buffoon at a masquerade?"

Miss Milner's face changed to its former appearance.

"I have seen grave characters there, my Lord," said Miss Woodley.

"Dear Miss Woodley," cried Miss Milner, "why persuade Lord Elmwood to put on a mask, just at the time he has laid it aside."

His patience was now tempted to its height, and he answered, "If you suspect me of inconsistency, madam, you shall find me changed."

Pleased that she had been able at last to irritate him, she smiled with a degree of triumph, and in that humour was going to reply ; but before she could speak four words, and before she thought of it, he abruptly left the room.

She was highly offended at this insult, and declared, "from that moment she banished him from her heart for ever." To prove that she set his love and his anger at equal defiance, she immediately ordered her carriage, and said, she "was going to some of her acquaintance, whom she knew to have tickets, and with whom she would fix upon the habit she was to appear in at the masquerade ; for nothing, unless she was locked up, should alter the resolution she had formed of being there." To remonstrate at that moment, Miss Woodley knew would be in vain. Her coach came to the door, and she drove away.

She did not return to dinner, nor till it was late in the evening. Lord Elmwood was at home, but he never once mentioned her name.

She came home, after he had retired, in great spirits; and then, for the first time in her whole life, appeared careless what he might think of her conduct: but her whole thoughts were occupied upon the business which had employed the chief of her day; and her dress engrossed all her conversation, as soon as Miss Woodley and she were alone. She told her she had been shown the greatest variety of beautiful and becoming dresses she had ever beheld: "and yet," said she, "I have at last fixed upon a very plain one; but one I look so well in, that you will hardly know me, when I have it on."

"You are seriously, then, resolved to go," said Miss Woodley, "if you hear no more on the subject from your guardian?"

"Whether I do hear or not, Miss Woodley, I am equally resolved to go."

"But you know, my dear, he has desired you not; and you used always to obey his commands."

"As my guardian I certainly did obey him; and I could obey him as a husband: but as a lover I will not."

"Yet that is the way never to have him for a husband."

"As he pleases; for if he will not submit to be my lover, I will not submit to be his wife—nor has he the affection that I require in a husband."

Thus the old sentiments, repeated again and again, prevented a separation till towards morning.

Miss Milner, for that night, dreamed less of her guardian than of the masquerade. On the evening of the next day it was to be: she was up early, breakfasted in her dressing-room, and remained there most of the day, busied in a thousand preparations for the night; one of them was, to arrange her hair in falling ringlets. Her next care was, that her dress should display her fine person to the best advantage. It did so. Miss Woodley entered as it was trying on, and was all astonishment at the elegance of the habit, and its beautiful effect upon her graceful figure; but most of all, she was astonished at her venturing on such a character; for though it represented the goddess of Chastity, yet from the buskins, and the petticoat festooned far above the ankle, it had, on a first glance, the appearance of a female much less virtuous. Miss Woodley admired this dress, yet objected to it; but as she admired first, her objections after had no weight.

"Where is Lord Elmwood?" said Miss Milner: "he must not see me."

"No, for Heaven's sake," cried Miss Woodley: "I would not have him see you in such a disguise for the universe."

"And yet," returned the other, with a sigh, "why am I then thus pleased with my dress? for I had rather he should admire me than all the world besides, and yet he alone must not see me in it."

"But he would not admire you so dressed," said Miss Woodley.

"How shall I contrive to avoid him," said Miss Milner, "if in the evening he should offer to hand me into my carriage? But I believe he will not be in good humour enough to do that."

"You had better dress at the house of the ladies with whom you go," said Miss Woodley; and this was agreed upon.

At dinner they learnt that Lord Elmwood was to go that evening to Windsor, in order to be in readiness for the king's hunt early in the morning. This intelligence having dispersed Miss Milner's fears, she concluded upon dressing at home.

Lord Elmwood appeared at dinner, in an even, but not in a good temper. The subject of the masquerade was never mentioned, nor indeed was it once in his thoughts; for though he was offended at his ward's behaviour on the occasion, and considered that she committed a fault in telling him, "she would go," yet he never suspected she meant to do so; not even at the time she said she did; much less that she would persist, coolly and deliberately, in so direct a contradiction to his will. She, on her part, flattered herself, that his going to Windsor was intended in order to give her an opportunity of passing the evening as she pleased, without his being obliged to know of it, and consequently to complain. Miss Woodley, who was willing to hope as she wished, began to be of the same opinion; and, without reluctance, dressed herself as a wood-nymph to accompany her friend.

CHAPTER XXVI.

At half after eleven, Miss Milner's chair and another with Miss Woodley took them from Lord Elmwood's, to call upon the party (wood-nymphs and huntresses) who were to accompany them, and make up the suite of Diana.

They had not left the house two minutes, when a thundering rap came at the door: it was Lord Elmwood in a post-chaise. Upon some occasion the next day's hunt was deferred: he had been made acquainted with it, and came from Windsor at that late hour. After he had informed Mrs. Horton and Mr. Sandford, who were sitting together, of the cause of his sudden return, and had some supper ordered to be brought in for him, he enquired, "what company had been supping there?"

"We have been alone the whole evening, my Lord," replied Mrs. Horton.

"Nay," returned he, "I saw two chairs, with several servants, come out of the door as I drove up, but what livery I could not discern."

"We have had no creature here," repeated Mrs. Horton.

"Nor has Miss Milner had visitors?" asked he.

This brought Mrs. Horton to her recollection, and she cried, "Oh! now I know;"—and then checked herself, as if she knew too much.

"What do you know, madam?" said he, sharply.

"Nothing," said Mrs. Horton, "I know nothing;" and she lifted up her hands and shook her head.

"So all people say, who know a great deal," cried Sandford; "and I suspect that is at present your case."

"Then I know more than I wish, I am sure, Mr. Sandford," returned she, shrugging up her shoulders.

Lord Elmwood was all impatience.

"Explain, madam, explain."

"Dear, my Lord," said she, "if your Lordship will recollect, you may just have the same knowledge that I have."

"Recollect what?" said he, sternly.

"The quarrel you and your ward had about the masquerade."

"What of that? She is not gone there?" he cried.

"I am not sure she is," returned Mrs. Horton. "But if your Lordship saw two sedan chairs going out of this house, I cannot but suspect it must be Miss Milner and my niece going to the masquerade."

He made no answer, but rung the bell violently. A servant entered. "Send Miss Milner's maid hither," said he, "immediately." The man withdrew.

"Nay, my Lord," cried Mrs. Horton, "any of the other servants could tell you just as well, whether Miss Milner is at home, or gone out."

"Perhaps not," replied he.

The maid entered.

"Where is your mistress?" said Lord Elmwood.

The woman had received no orders to conceal where the ladies were gone, and yet a secret influence, which governs the thoughts of all waiting-women and chambermaids, whispered to her that she ought not to tell the truth.

"Where is your mistress?" repeated he, in a louder voice than before.

"Gone out, my Lord," she replied.

"Where?"

"My lady did not tell me."

"And don't you know?"

"No, my Lord," she answered, and without blushing.

"Is this the night of the masquerade?" said he.

"I don't know, my Lord, upon my word; but I believe, my Lord, it is not."

Sandford, as soon as Lord Elmwood had asked the last question, ran hastily to the table, at the other side of the room, took something from it, and returned to his place again; and when the maid said, "It was not the night of the masquerade," he exclaimed, "But it is, my Lord, it is,—yes, it is!" and showing a newspaper in his hand, pointed to the paragraph which contained the information.

"Leave the room," said Lord Elmwood to the woman: "I have done with you." She went away.

"Yes, yes, here it is," repeated Sandford, with the paper

still in his hand. He then read the paragraph:—"The masquerade at the Right Honourable Lady G——'s this evening"—'This evening, my Lord, you find'—"it is expected will be the most brilliant of any thing of the kind for these many years past."

"They should not put such things in the papers," said Mrs. Horton, "to tempt young women to their ruin." The word ruin grated upon Lord Elmwood's ear; and he said to the servant who came to wait on him while he supped, "Take the supper away." He had not attempted either to eat, or even to sit down; and he now walked backwards and forwards in the room, lost in thought and care.

A little time after, one of Miss Milner's footmen came in upon some occasion, and Mr. Sandford said to him, "Pray did you attend your lady to the masquerade?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man.

Lord Elmwood stopped himself short in his walk, and said to the servant, "You did?"

"Yes, my Lord," replied he.

He walked again.

"I should like to know what she was dressed in," said Mrs. Horton; and turning to the servant, "Do you know what your lady had on?"

"Yes, madam," replied the man; "she was in men's clothes."

"How!" cried Lord Elmwood.

"You tell a story, to be sure," said Mrs. Horton to the servant.

"No," cried Sandford, "I am sure he does not; for he is an honest good young man, and would not tell a lie upon any account. Would you, Thomas?"

Lord Elmwood ordered Miss Milner's woman to be again sent up. She came.

"In what dress did your lady go to the masquerade?" he asked, and with a look so extremely morose it seemed to command the answer in a single word, and that word to be truth.

A mind, with a spark of sensibility more than this woman possessed, could not have equivocated with such an interrogator; but her reply was, "She went in her own dress, my Lord."

"Was it a man's or a woman's?" asked he, with a look of the same command.

"Ha, ha, my Lord!" half laughing and half crying; "a woman's dress, to be sure, my Lord."

On which Sandford cried,—

"Call the footman up, and let him confront her."

He was called; but Lord Elmwood, now disgusted at the scene, withdrew to the further end of the room, and left Sandford to question them.

With all the authority and consequence of a country magistrate, Sandford, his back to the fire, and the witnesses before him, began with the footman.

"In what dress do you say that you saw your lady decorated, when you attended, and went along with her to the masquerade?"

"In men's clothes," replied the man, boldly and firmly as before.

"Bless my soul, Thomas, how can you say such a thing?" cried the woman.

"What dress do *you* say she went in?" cried Sandford to her.

"In women's clothes, indeed, sir."

"This is very odd!" said Mrs. Horton.

"Had she on, or had she not on, a coat?" asked Sandford.

"Yes, sir, a petticoat," replied the woman.

"Do *you* say she had on a petticoat?" said Sandford to the man.

"I can't answer exactly for that," replied he; "but I know she had boots on."

"They were not boots," replied the maid, with vehemence.

"Indeed, sir," turning to Sandford, "they were only half boots."

"My girl," said Sandford kindly to her, "your own evidence convicts your mistress; what has a woman to do with *any* boots?"

Impatient at this mummery, Lord Elmwood rose, ordered the servants out of the room, and then, looking at his watch, found it was near one. "At what hour am I to expect her home?" said he.

"Perhaps not till three in the morning," answered Mrs. Horton.

"Three! more likely six," cried Sandford.

"I can't wait with patience till that time," answered Lord Elmwood, with a deep and most anxious sigh.

"You had better go to bed, my Lord," said Mrs. Horton; "and, by sleeping, the time will pass away unperceived."

"If I *could* sleep, madam."

"Will you play a game of cards, my Lord?" said Sandford; "for I will not leave you till she comes home: and though I am not used to sit up all night——"

"All night!" repeated Lord Elmwood; "she dares not stay all night."

"And yet, after going," said Sandford, "in defiance to your commands, I should suppose she dared."

"She is in good company, at least, my Lord," said Mrs. Horton.

"She does not know herself what company she is in," replied he.

"How should she," cried Sandford, "where every one hides his face."

Till five o'clock in the morning, in conversation such as this, the hours lingered away. Mrs. Horton, indeed, retired to her chamber at two, and left the gentlemen to a more serious discourse; but a discourse still less advantageous to poor Miss Milner.

She, during this time, was at the scene of pleasure she had painted to herself; and all the pleasure it gave her was, that she was sure she should never desire to go to a masquerade again. Its crowd and bustle fatigued her—its freedom offended her delicacy: and though she perceived that she was the first object of admiration in the place, yet there was one person still wanting to admire; and the regret at having transgressed his injunctions for so trivial an entertainment weighed upon her spirits, and added to their weariness. She would have come away sooner than she did: but she could not, with any degree of good manners, leave the company with whom she went; and not till half after four were they prevailed on to return.

Daylight just peeped through the shutters of the room in which Lord Elmwood and Sandford were sitting, when the sound of her carriage, and the sudden stop it made at the door, caused Lord Elmwood to start from his chair. He trembled extremely, and looked pale. Sandford was ashamed to seem to

notice it, yet he could not help asking him "to take a glass of wine." He took it, and for once evinced he was reduced so low as to be *glad* of such a resource.

What exact passion thus agitated Lord Elmwood at this crisis it is hard to define. Perhaps it was indignation at Miss Milner's imprudence, and exultation at being on the point of revenge: perhaps his emotion arose from joy, to find that she was safe returned: perhaps it was perturbation at the grief he felt that he must upbraid her: perhaps it was not one alone of these sensations, but all of them combined.

She, wearied out with the tedious night's dissipation, and far less joyous than melancholy, had fallen asleep as she rode home, and came half asleep out of her carriage. "Light me to my bedchamber instantly," said she to her maid, who waited in the hall to receive her. But one of Lord Elmwood's valets went up to her, and answered, "Madam, my Lord desires to see you before you retire."

"Your Lord!" she cried: "is he not from town?"

"No, madam, my Lord has been at home ever since you went out: and has been sitting up with Mr. Sandford waiting for you."

She was wide awake immediately. The heaviness was removed from her eyes; but fear, sorrow, and shame, seized upon her heart. She leaned against her maid, as if unable to support herself under these feelings, and said to Miss Woodley,—

"Make my excuse—I cannot see him to-night—I am unfit—indeed I cannot."

Miss Woodley was alarmed at the prospect of going to him by herself, and thus, perhaps, irritating him still more: she, therefore, said, "He has sent for *you*; for Heaven's sake do not disobey him a second time."

"No, dear madam, don't," cried her woman; "for he is like a lion—he has been scolding me."

"Good God!" exclaimed Miss Milner, and in a tone that seemed prophetic: "then he is not to be my husband, after all!"

"Yes," cried Miss Woodley, "if you will only be humble, and appear sorry. You know your power over him, and all may yet be well."

She turned her speaking eyes upon her friend, the tears starting from them, her lips trembling—"Do I not appear sorry?" she cried.

The bell at that moment rang furiously, and they hastened their steps to the door of the apartment where Lord Elmwood was.

"No," replied Miss Woodley to her last question, "this shuddering is only fright: say to him you are sorry, and beg his pardon."

"I cannot," replied she, "if Mr. Sandford be with him."

The servant opened the door, and she and Miss Woodley went in. Lord Elmwood, by this time, was composed, and received her with a slight inclination of his head: she bowed to him in return, and said, with some marks of humility,—

"I suppose, my Lord, I have done wrong."

"You have, indeed, Miss Milner," answered he; "but do not suppose that I mean to upbraid you: I am, on the contrary, going to release you from any such apprehension *for the future.*"

Those last three words he delivered with a countenance so serious and so determined, with an accent so firm and so decided, they pierced through her heart. Yet she did not weep, or even sigh; but her friend, knowing what she felt, exclaimed, "Oh!" as if for her.

She herself strove with her anguish, and replied (but with a faltering voice), "I expected as much, my Lord."

"Then, madam, you perhaps expect *all* that I intend?"

"In regard to myself," she replied, "I suppose I do."

"Then," said he, "you may expect that in a few days we shall part."

"I am prepared for it, my Lord," she answered, and, while she said so, sunk upon a chair.

"My Lord, what you have to say farther," said Miss Woodley, in tears, "defer till the morning:—Miss Milner, you see, is not able to bear it now."

"I have nothing to *say* farther," replied he, coolly: "I have now only to act."

"Lord Elmwood," cried Miss Milner, divided between grief and anger, "you think to terrify me by your menaces; but I can part with you: Heaven knows I can. Your late behaviour has reconciled me to a separation."

On this he was going out of the room; but Miss Woodley, catching hold of him, cried, "Oh! my Lord, do not leave her in this sorrow: pity her weakness, and forgive it." She was proceeding; and he seemed as if inclined to listen, when Sandford called out in a tone of voice so harsh,—

"Miss Woodley, what do you mean?" She gave a start, and desisted.

Lord Elmwood then turned to Sandford, and said,—“Nay, Mr. Sandford, you need entertain no doubts of me: I have judged, and have deter——”

He was going to say *determined*; but Miss Milner, who dreaded the word, interrupted the period, and exclaimed,—“Oh! could my poor father know the days of sorrow I have experienced since his death, how would he repent his fatal choice of a protector!”

This sentence in which his friend's memory was recalled, with an additional allusion to her long and secret love for him, affected Lord Elmwood. He was much moved, but ashamed of being so, and as soon as possible conquered the propensity to forgive. Yet, for a short interval, he did not know whether to go out of the room, or to remain in it; whether to speak, or to be silent. At length he turned towards her, and said,—

“Appeal to your father in some other form: in that (pointing to her dress), he will not know you. Reflect upon him, too, in your moments of dissipation, and let his memory control your indiscretions; not merely in an hour of contradiction call peevishly upon his name, only to wound the dearest friend you have.”

There was a degree of truth, and a degree of passionate feeling, in the conclusion of this speech, that alarmed Sandford: he caught up one of the candles, and, laying hold of his friend's elbow, drew him out of the room, crying, “Come, my Lord, come to your bedchamber—it is very late—it is morning—it is time to rise.” And by a continual repetition of these words, in a very loud voice, he wilfully drowned whatever Lord Elmwood, or any other person, might have wished either to have said or to have heard.

In this manner, Lord Elmwood was forced out of the apartment, and the evening's vicissitudes ended.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Two whole days passed in the bitterest suspense on the part of Miss Milner, while neither one word nor look from Lord Elmwood denoted the most trivial change of the sentiments he had declared on the night of the masquerade. Still those sentiments or intentions were not explicitly delivered: they were more like intimations than solemn declarations: — for though he had said, “he would never reproach her *for the future*,” and that “she might expect they should part,” he had not positively said they should; and upon this doubtful meaning of his words, she hung with the strongest agitation of hope and of fear.

Miss Woodley, seeing the distress of her mind (much as she endeavoured to conceal it), entreated, nay implored of her to permit her to be a mediator; to suffer her to ask for a private interview with Lord Elmwood, and, if she found him inflexible, to behave with a proper spirit in return; but if he appeared not absolutely averse to a reconciliation, to offer it in so cautious a manner, that it might take place without farther uneasiness on either side. But Miss Milner peremptorily forbade this, and, acknowledging to her friend every weakness she felt on the occasion, yet concluded with solemnly declaring, that “after what had passed between her and Lord Elmwood, *he* must be the first to make a concession before she herself would condescend to be reconciled.”

“I believe I know Lord Elmwood’s temper,” replied Miss Woodley; “and I do not think he will be easily induced to beg pardon for a fault which he thinks *you* have committed.”

“Then he does not love me.”

“Pshaw! Miss Milner, this is the old argument. He may love you too well to spoil you. Consider that he is your guardian as well as your lover: he means also to become your husband; and he is a man of such nice honour, that he will not

indulge you with any power before marriage, to which he does not intend to submit hereafter."

"But tenderness, affection, the politeness due from a lover to his mistress demands his submission; and as I now despair of enticing, I will oblige him to it: at least I'll make the experiment, and know my fate at once."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Invite Lord Frederick to the house, and ask my guardian's consent for our immediate union: you will then see what effect that measure will have upon his pride."

"But you will then make it too late for him to be humble. If you resolve on this, my dear Miss Milner, you are undone at once; you may thus hurry yourself into a marriage with a man you do not love, and the misery of your whole future life may be the result. Or, would you force Mr. Dorriforth (I mean Lord Elmwood) to another duel with my Lord Frederick?"

"No, call him Dorriforth," answered she, with the tears stealing from her eyes: "I thank you for calling him so; for by that name alone is he dear to me."

"Nay, Miss Milner, with what rapture did you not receive his love as Lord Elmwood!"

"But under this title he has been barbarous; under the first, he was all friendship and tenderness."

Notwithstanding Miss Milner indulged herself in all these soft bewailings to her friend, before Lord Elmwood she maintained a degree of pride and steadiness which surprised even him, who perhaps thought less of her love for him than any other person. She now began to fear she had gone too far in discovering her affection, and resolved to make trial of a contrary method. She determined to retrieve that haughty character which had inspired so many of her admirers with passion, and take the chance of its effect upon this only suitor, to whom she ever acknowledged a mutual attachment. But although she resumed and acted this character well—so well that every one but Miss Woodley thought her in earnest; yet, with nice and attentive anxiety, she watched even the slightest circumstances that might revive her hopes, or confirm her despair. Lord Elmwood's behaviour was calculated only to produce the latter: he was cold, polite, and perfectly indifferent. Yet, whatever

his manners now were, they did not remove from her recollection what they had been. She recalled, with delight, the ardour with which he had first declared his passion to her, and the thousand proofs he had since given of its reality. From the constancy of his disposition, she depended that sentiments like these were not totally eradicated; and from the extreme desire which Mr. Sandford now, more than ever, discovered of depreciating her in his patron's esteem, from the now more than common zeal which urged him to take Lord Elmwood from her company, whenever he had it in his power, she was led to believe, that while his friend entertained such strong fears of his relapsing into love, she had reason to indulge the strongest hopes that he would relapse.

But the reserve, and even indifference, that she had so well assumed for a few days, and which might, perhaps, have effected her design, she had not the patience to persevere in, without calling levity to their aid. She visited repeatedly without saying where, or with whom; kept later hours than usual—appeared in the highest spirits; sung, laughed, and never heaved a sigh, but when she was alone.

Still Lord Elmwood protracted a resolution, that he was determined he would never break when taken.

Miss Woodley was excessively uneasy, and with cause. She saw her friend was providing herself with a weight of cares, which she might soon find infinitely too much for her strength to bear. She would have reasoned with her, but all her arguments had long since proved unavailing. She wished to speak to Lord Elmwood upon the subject, and (unknown to her) plead her excuse; but he apprehended Miss Woodley's intention, and evidently shunned her. Mr. Sandford was now the only person to whom she could speak of Miss Milner; and the delight he took to expatiate on her faults was more sorrow to her friend than not to speak of her at all. She, therefore, sat a silent spectator, waiting with dread for the time when she, who now scorned her advice, would fly to her in vain for comfort.

Sandford had, however, said one thing to Miss Woodley, which gave her a ray of hope. During their conversation on the subject (not by way of consolation to her, but as a reproach to Lord Elmwood), he one day angrily exclaimed, "And yet, notwithstanding all this provocation, he has not come to the de-

termination that he will think no more of her : he lingers and he hesitates. I never saw him so weak upon any occasion before."

This was joyful hearing to Miss Woodley : still she could not but reflect, the longer he was in coming to this determination, the more irrevocable it would be when once taken ; and every moment that passed she trembled lest it should be the very moment in which Lord Elmwood should resolve to banish Miss Milner from his heart.

Amongst her unpardonable indiscretions, during this trial upon the temper of her guardian, was the frequent mention of many gentlemen who had been her professed admirers, and the mention of them with partiality. Teased, if not tortured, by this, Lord Elmwood still behaved with a manly evenness of temper, and neither appeared provoked on the subject nor insolently careless. In a single instance, however, this calmness was near deserting him.

Entering the drawing-room, one evening, he started, on seeing Lord Frederick Lawnley there, in earnest conversation with Miss Milner.

Mrs. Horton and Miss Woodley were both indeed present, and Lord Frederick was talking in an audible voice upon some indifferent subjects ; but with that impressive manner in which a man never fails to speak to the woman he loves, be the subject what it may. The moment Lord Elmwood started, which was the moment he entered, Lord Frederick arose.

"I beg your pardon, my Lord," said Lord Elmwood ; "I protest I did not know you."

"I ought to entreat your Lordship's pardon," returned Lord Frederick, "for this intrusion, which an accident alone has occasioned. Miss Milner has been almost overturned by the carelessness of a lady's coachman, in whose carriage she was, and therefore suffered me to bring her home in mine."

"I hope you are not hurt," said Lord Elmwood to Miss Milner ; but his voice was so much affected by what he felt, that he could scarce articulate the words. Not with the apprehension that she was hurt was he thus agitated ; for the gaiety of her manners convinced him *that* could not be the case, nor did he indeed suppose any accident of the kind mentioned had occurred ; but the circumstance of unexpectedly seeing Lord

Frederick had taken him off his guard; and being totally unprepared, he could not conceal indications of the surprise and of the shock it had given him.

Lord Frederick, who had heard nothing of his intended union with his ward (for it was even kept a secret, at present, from every servant in the house), imputed this discomposure to the personal resentment he might bear him, in consequence of their duel; for though Lord Elmwood had assured the uncle of Lord Frederick (who once waited upon him upon the subject of Miss Milner) that all resentment was, on his part, entirely at an end; and that he was willing to consent to his ward's marriage with his nephew, if she would concur; yet Lord Frederick doubted the sincerity of this protestation, and would still have had the delicacy not to have entered Lord Elmwood's house, had he not been encouraged by Miss Milner, and emboldened by his love. Personal resentment was therefore the construction he put upon Lord Elmwood's emotion on entering the room; but Miss Milner and Miss Woodley knew his agitation to arise from a far different cause.

After his entrance, Lord Frederick did not attempt once to resume his seat; but having bowed most respectfully to all present, he took his leave, while Miss Milner followed him as far as the door, and repeated her thanks for his protection.

Lord Elmwood was hurt beyond measure; but he had a second concern, which was, that he had not the power to conceal how much he was affected. He trembled. When he attempted to speak, he stammered: he perceived his face burning with confusion; and thus one confusion gave birth to another, till his state was pitiable.

Miss Milner, with all her assumed gaiety and real insolence, had not, however, the insolence to seem as if she observed him; she had only the confidence to observe him by stealth. And Mrs. Horton and Miss Woodley having opportunely begun a discourse upon some trivial occurrences, gave him time to recover himself by degrees. Still it was merely by degrees; for the impression which this incident had made was deep, and not easily to be erased. The entrance of Mr. Sandford, who knew nothing of what had happened, was, however, another relief; for he began a conversation with him, which they very soon re-

tired into the library to terminate. Miss Milner, taking Miss Woodley with her, went directly to her own apartment, and there exclaimed in rapture,—

“He is mine!—he loves me!—and he is mine for ever!”

Miss Woodley congratulated her upon believing so, but confessed she herself “had fears.”

“What fears?” cried Miss Milner. “Don’t you perceive that he loves me?”

“I do,” said Miss Woodley; “but that I always believed; and I think if he loves you now, he has yet the good sense to know that he has reason to hate you.”

“What has good sense to do with love?” returned Miss Milner. “If a lover of mine suffers his understanding to get the better of his affection ——”

The same arguments were going to be repeated; but Miss Woodley interrupted her, by requiring an explanation of her conduct as to Lord Frederick, whom, at least, she was treating with cruelty, if she only made use of his affection to stimulate that of Lord Elmwood.

“By no means, my dear Miss Woodley,” returned she. “I have, indeed, done with my Lord Frederick from this day, and he has certainly given me the proof I wanted of Lord Elmwood’s love; but then I did not engage him to this by the smallest ray of hope. No; do not suspect me of such artifice while my heart was another’s; and I assure you, seriously, that it was from the circumstance we described he came with me home: yet, I must own, that if I had not had this design upon Lord Elmwood’s jealousy in idea, I would have walked on foot through the streets, rather than have suffered his rival’s civilities. But he pressed his services so violently, and my Lady Evans (in whose coach I was when the accident happened) pressed me so violently to accept them, that he cannot expect any further meaning from this acquiescence than my own convenience.”

Miss Woodley was going to reply, when she resumed,—

“Nay, if you intend to say I have done wrong, still I am not sorry for it, when it has given me such convincing proofs of Lord Elmwood’s love. Did you see him? I am afraid you did not see how he trembled, nor observe how that manly voice faltered, as mine does sometimes? His proud heart was

humbled too, as mine is sometimes. Oh! Miss Woodley, I have been counterfeiting indifference to *him*—I now find that all *his* indifference to *me* has been counterfeit also, and that we not only love, but love equally.”

“Suppose this all as you hope, I yet think it highly necessary that your guardian should be informed, seriously informed, it was mere accident (for, at present, that plea seems but as a subterfuge) which brought Lord Frederick hither.”

“No; that will be destroying the work so successfully begun. I will not suffer any explanation to take place, but let my Lord Elmwood act just as his love shall dictate: and now I have no longer a doubt of its excess, instead of stooping to him, I wait in the certain expectation of his submission to me.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN vain, for three long days, did Miss Milner wait impatiently for this submission; not a sign, not a symptom appeared. Nay, Lord Elmwood had, since the evening of Lord Frederick's visit (which, at the time it took place, seemed to affect him exceedingly), become just the same man he was before the circumstance occurred: except, indeed, that he was less thoughtful, and now and then cheerful; but without any appearance that his cheerfulness was affected. Miss Milner was vexed—she was alarmed,—but was ashamed to confess those humiliating sensations even to Miss Woodley. She supported, therefore, when in company, the vivacity she had so long assumed; but gave way, when alone, to a still greater degree of melancholy than usual. She no longer applauded her scheme of bringing Lord Frederick to the house, and was terrified lest, on some pretence, he should dare to call again. But as these were feelings which her pride would not suffer her to disclose even to her friend, who would have consoled with her, their effects were doubly poignant.

Sitting in her dressing-room one forenoon with Miss Woodley, and burdened with a load of grief that she blushed to acknowledge; while her companion was charged with apprehensions that she too was loath to disclose, one of Lord Elmwood's valets tapped gently at the door, and delivered a letter to Miss Milner. By the person who brought it, as well as by the address, she knew it came from Lord Elmwood, and laid it down upon her toilet, as if she was fearful to unfold it.

"What is that?" said Miss Woodley.

"A letter from Lord Elmwood," replied Miss Milner.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Miss Woodley.

"Nay," returned she, "it is, I have no doubt, a letter to beg my pardon." But her reluctance to open it plainly evinced she did not think so.

"Do not read it yet," said Miss Woodley.

"I do not intend it," replied she, trembling extremely.

"Will you dine first?" said Miss Woodley.

"No: for not knowing its contents, I shall not know how to conduct myself towards him."

Here a silence followed. Miss Milner took up the letter—looked earnestly at the hand-writing on the outside—at the seal—inspected into its folds—and seemed to wish, by some equivocal method, to guess at the contents, without having the courage to come at the certain knowledge of them.

Curiosity, at length, got the better of her fears: she opened the letter, and, scarcely able to hold it while she read, she read the following words:—

"Madam,

"While I considered you only as my ward, my friendship for you was unbounded: when I looked upon you as a woman formed to grace a fashionable circle, my admiration equalled my friendship; and when fate permitted me to behold you in the tender light of my betrothed wife, my soaring love left those humbler passions at a distance.

"That you have still my friendship, my admiration, and even my love, I will not attempt to deceive either myself or you by disavowing: but still, with a firm assurance, I declare, that prudence outweighs them all; and I have not, from henceforward,

the slightest desire to be regarded by you in any other respect than as one 'who wishes you well.' That you ever beheld me in the endearing quality of a destined and an affectionate husband (such as I would have proved) has been a deception upon my hopes. They acknowledge the mistake, and are humbled: but I entreat you to spare their farther trial, and for a single week not to insult me with the open preference of another. In the short space of that period I shall have taken my leave of you—*for ever*.

"I shall visit Italy, and some other parts of the Continent; from whence I propose passing to the West Indies, in order to inspect my possessions there: nor shall I return to England till after a few years' absence; in which time I hope to become once more reconciled to the change of state I am enjoined—a change I now most fervently wish could be entirely dispensed with.

"The occasion of my remaining here a week longer is to settle some necessary affairs; among which the principal is, that of delivering to a friend, a man of worth and of tenderness, all those writings which have invested me with the power of my guardianship. He will, the day after my departure (without one upbraiding word), resign them to you in my name; and even your most respected father, could he behold the resignation, would concur in its propriety.

"And now, my dear Miss Milner, let not affected resentment, contempt, or levity, oppose that serenity, which, for the week to come, I wish to enjoy. By complying with this request, give me to believe, that, since you have been under my care, you think I have, at least, faithfully discharged some part of my duty. And, wherever I have been inadequate to your expectations, attribute my demerits to some infirmity of mind, rather than to a negligence of your happiness. Yet, be the cause what it will, since these faults have existed, I do not attempt to disavow or extenuate them, and I beg your pardon.

"However time and a succession of objects may eradicate more tender sentiments, I am sure *never* to lose the liveliest anxiety for your welfare; and with all that solicitude, which cannot be described, I entreat for your own sake, for mine, when we shall be far asunder, and for the sake of your dead father's

memory, that, *upon every important occasion, you will call your serious judgment to direct you.*

"I am, Madam,

"Your sincerest friend,

"ELMWOOD."

After she had read every syllable of this letter carefully, it dropped from her hands; but she uttered not a word. There was, however, paleness in her face, a deadness in her eye, and a kind of palsy over her frame, which Miss Woodley, who had seen her in every stage of her unhappiness, never had seen before.

"I do not want to read the letter," said Miss Woodley; "your looks tell me its contents."

"They will then discover to Lord Elmwood," replied she, "what I feel; but, Heaven forbid—that would sink me even lower than I am."

Scarce able to move, she rose, and looked in her glass, as if to arrange her features, and impose upon him: alas! it was of no avail—a contented mind could alone effect what she desired.

"You must endeavour," said Miss Woodley, "to feel the disposition you wish to make appear."

"I will," replied she: "I will feel a proper pride, and, consequently, a proper indifference to this treatment."

And so desirous was she to attain the appearance of these sentiments, that she made the strongest efforts to calm her thoughts, in order to acquire it.

"I have but a few days to remain with him," she said to herself, "and we part for ever. During those few days it is not only my duty to obey his commands, or rather comply with his request, but it is also my wish to leave upon his mind an impression which may not add to the ill opinion he has formed of me, but, perhaps, serve to diminish it. If, in every other instance, my conduct has been blamable, he shall, at least in this, acknowledge its merit. The fate I have drawn upon myself he shall find I can be resigned to; and he shall be convinced that the woman, of whose weakness he has had so many fatal proofs, is yet in possession of some fortitude—fortitude to bid him farewell, without discovering one affected or one real pang,

though her death should be the consequence of her suppressed sufferings."

Thus she resolved and thus she acted. The severest judge could not have arraigned her conduct, from the day she received Lord Elmwood's letter to the day of his departure. She had, indeed, involuntary weaknesses, but none with which she did not struggle, and in general her struggles were victorious.

The first time she saw him after the receipt of his letter was on the evening of the same day. She had a little concert of amateurs of music, and was herself singing and playing when he entered the room: the connoisseurs immediately perceived she made a false cadence: but Lord Elmwood was no connoisseur in the art, and he did not observe it.

They occasionally spoke to each other during the evening, but the subjects were general; and though their manners, every time they spoke, were perfectly polite, they were not marked with the smallest degree of familiarity. To describe his behaviour exactly, it was the same as his letter—polite, friendly, composed, and resolved. Some of the company staid supper, which prevented the embarrassment that must unavoidably have arisen, had the family been by themselves.

The next morning each breakfasted in his separate apartments—more company dined with them: in the evening, and at supper, Lord Elmwood was from home.

Thus, all passed on as peaceably as he had requested, and Miss Milner had not betrayed one particle of frailty; when, the third day at dinner, some gentlemen of his acquaintance being at table, one of them said,—

"And so, my Lord, you absolutely set off on Tuesday morning?"

This was Friday.

Sandford and he both replied at the same time, "Yes." And Sandford, but not Lord Elmwood, looked at Miss Milner when he spoke. Her knife and fork gave a sudden spring in her hand, but no other emotion witnessed what she felt.

"Ay, Elmwood," cried another gentleman at table, "you'll bring home, I am afraid, a foreign wife, and that I sha'n't forgive."

"It is his errand abroad, I make no doubt," said another visiter.

Before he could return an answer, Sandford cried, "And what objection to a foreigner for a wife? Do not crowned heads all marry foreigners? And who happier in the married state than some kings?"

Lord Elmwood directed his eyes to the side of the table opposite to that where Miss Milner sat.

"Nay," answered one of the guests, who was a country gentleman, "what do you say, ladies? Do you think my Lord ought to go out of his own nation for a wife?" and he looked at Miss Milner for the reply.

Miss Woodley, uneasy at her friend's being thus forced to give an opinion upon so delicate a subject, endeavoured to satisfy the gentleman, by answering to the question herself: "Whoever my Lord Elmwood marries, sir," said Miss Woodley, "he, no doubt, will be happy."

"But what say you, madam?" asked the visiter, still keeping his eyes on Miss Milner.

"That whoever Lord Elmwood marries, he *deserves* to be happy," she returned, with the utmost command of her voice and looks; for Miss Woodley, by replying first, had given her time to collect herself.

The colour flew to Lord Elmwood's face, as she delivered this short sentence; and Miss Woodley persuaded herself she saw a tear start in his eye.

Miss Milner did not look that way.

In an instant he found means to change the topic, but that of his journey still employed the conversation; and what horses, servants, and carriages he took with him, was minutely asked, and so accurately answered, either by himself or by Mr. Sandford, that Miss Milner, although she had known her doom before, till now had received no circumstantial account of it; and as circumstances increase or diminish all we feel, the hearing these things in detail described increased the bitterness of their truth.

Soon after dinner the ladies retired; and from that time, though Miss Milner's behaviour continued the same, yet her looks and her voice were totally altered. For the world, she could not have looked cheerfully: for the world, she could not have spoken with a sprightly accent: she frequently began in one, but not three words did she utter, before her tones sunk

into a melody of dejection. Not only her colour but her features became changed; her eyes lost their brilliancy, her lips seemed to hang without the power of motion, her head drooped, and her dress looked neglected. Conscious of this appearance, and conscious of the cause from whence it arose, it was her desire to hide herself from the fatal object, the source of her despondency. Accordingly, she sat alone, or with Miss Woodley in her own apartment, as much as was consistent with that civility which her guardian had requested, and which forbade her from totally absenting herself.

Miss Woodley felt so acutely the torments of her friend, that had not her reason told her, that the inflexible mind of Lord Elmwood was fixed beyond her power to shake, she had cast herself at his feet, and implored the return of his affection and tenderness, as the only means to save his once-beloved ward from an untimely grave. But her understanding—her knowledge of his firm and immovable temper, and of all his provocations—her knowledge of his word, long since given to Sandford, “that if once resolved, he would not recall his resolution,”—the certainty of the various plans arranged for his travels, all convinced her, that by any interference, she would only expose Miss Milner’s love and delicacy to a contemptuous rejection.

If the conversation, when the family were assembled, did not every day turn upon the subject of Lord Elmwood’s departure,—a conversation he evidently avoided himself,—yet, every day, some new preparation for his journey struck either the ear or the eye of Miss Milner; and had she beheld a frightful spectre, she could not have shuddered with more horror, than when she unexpectedly passed his large trunks in the hall, nailed and corded, ready to be sent off to meet him at Venice. At the sight, she flew from the company that chanced to be with her, and stole to the first lonely corner of the house to conceal her tears: she reclined her head upon her hands, and bedewed them with the sudden anguish that had overcome her. She heard a footstep advancing towards the spot where she hoped to have been secreted; she lifted up her eyes, and saw Lord Elmwood. Pride was the first emotion his presence inspired; pride, which arose from the humility into which she was plunged.

She looked at him earnestly, as if to imply, "What now, my Lord?"

He only answered with a bow, which expressed, "I beg your pardon," and immediately withdrew.

Thus each understood the other's language, without either having uttered a word.

The just construction she put upon his looks and manner upon this occasion, kept up her spirits for some little time; and she blessed Heaven for the singular favour of showing to her, clearly, by this accident—his negligence of her sorrows, his total indifference.

The next day was the eve of that on which he was to depart—of the day on which she was to bid adieu to Dorriforth, to her guardian, to Lord Elmwood; to all her hopes at once.

The moment she awoke on Monday morning, the recollection that this was, perhaps, the last day she was ever again to see him, softened all the resentment his yesterday's conduct had raised; forgetting his austerity, and all she had once termed cruelties, she now only remembered his friendship, his tenderness, and his love. She was impatient to see him, and promised herself, for this last day, to neglect no one opportunity of being with him. For that purpose she did not breakfast in her own room as she had done for several mornings before, but went into the breakfast room, where all the family in general met. She was rejoiced, on hearing his voice as she opened the door; yet the mere sound made her tremble so much, that she could scarcely totter to the table.

Miss Woodley looked at her as she entered, and was never so shocked at seeing her; for never had she yet seen her look so ill. As she approached, she made an inclination of her head to Mrs. Horton—then to her guardian, as was her custom, when she first saw them in a morning: he looked in her face as he bowed in return, then fixed his eyes upon the fire-place, rubbed his forehead, and began talking with Mr. Sandford.

Sandford, during breakfast, by accident cast a glance upon Miss Milner: his attention was caught by her death-like countenance, and he looked earnestly. He then turned to Lord Elmwood, to see if he was observing her appearance: he was not—and so much were her thoughts engaged on him alone, that she did not once perceive Sandford gazing at her.

one; and she rigorously enjoined herself not to shrink from the little which remained. The certain end, that would be, so soon, put to this painful deception, encouraged her to struggle through it with redoubled zeal; and this was but necessary, as her weakness increased. She therefore listened, she talked, and even smiled with the rest of the company; nor did *their* vivacity seem to arise from a much less compulsive source than her own.

It was past twelve when Lord Elmwood looked at his watch, and rising from his chair, went up to Mrs. Horton, and taking her hand, said, "Till I see you again, madam, I sincerely wish you every happiness."

Miss Milner fixed her eyes upon the table before her.

"My Lord," replied Mrs. Horton, "I sincerely wish you health and happiness likewise."

He then went to Miss Woodley, and, taking her hand, repeated much the same as he had said to Mrs. Horton.

Miss Milner now trembled beyond all power of concealment.

"My Lord," replied Miss Woodley, a good deal affected, "I sincerely hope my prayers for your happiness may be heard."

She and Mrs. Horton were both standing, as well as Lord Elmwood; but Miss Milner kept her seat, till his eye was turned upon her, and he moved slowly towards her: she then rose; every one who was present, attentive to what he would now say, and how she would receive what he said, here cast their eyes upon them, and listened with impatience. They were all disappointed: he did not utter a syllable. Yet he took her hand, and held it closely between his. He then bowed most respectfully, and left her.

No sentence of, "I wish you well,"—"I wish you health and happiness;"—no "prayers for blessings on her;"—not even the word "farewell" escaped his lips. Perhaps, to have attempted any of these might have impeded his utterance.

She had behaved with fortitude the whole evening, and she continued to do so, till the moment he turned away from her. Her eyes then overflowed with tears; and in the agony of her mind, not knowing what she did, she laid her cold hand upon the person next to her: it happened to be Sandford; but not

observing it was he, she grasped his hand with violence ; yet he did not snatch it away, nor look at her with his wonted severity. And thus she stood, silent and motionless, while Lord Elmwood, now at the door, bowed once more to all the company, and retired.

Sandford had still Miss Milner's hand fixed upon his ; and when the door was shut after Lord Elmwood, he turned his head to look in her face, and turned it with some marks of apprehension for the grief he might find there. She strove to overcome that grief, and, after a heavy sigh, sat down, as if resigned to the fate to which she was decreed.

Instead of following Lord Elmwood, as usual, Sandford poured out a glass of wine, and drank it. A general silence ensued for near three minutes. At last turning himself round on his chair towards Miss Milner, who sat like a statue of despair at his side, "Will you breakfast with us to-morrow?" said he.

She made no answer.

"We sha'n't breakfast before half after six," continued he, "I dare say ; and if you can rise so early—why, do."

"Miss Milner," said Miss Woodley (for she caught eagerly at the hope of her passing this night in less unhappiness than she had foreboded), "pray rise at that hour to breakfast : Mr. Sandford would not invite you, if he thought it would displease Lord Elmwood."

"Not I," replied Sandford, churlishly.

"Then desire her maid to call her," said Mrs. Horton to Miss Woodley.

"Nay, she will be awake, I have no doubt," returned her niece.

"No," replied Miss Milner ; "since Lord Elmwood has thought proper to take his leave of me, without even speaking a word, by my own design never will I see him again ;" and her tears burst forth, as if her heart burst at the same time.

"Why did not *you* speak to *him*?" cried Sandford. "Pray did *you* bid *him* farewell? And I don't see why one is not as much to be blamed in that respect as the other."

"I was too weak to say I wished him happy," cried Miss Milner ; "but Heaven is my witness, I do wish him so from my soul."

"And do you imagine he does not wish you so?" cried Sandford. "You should judge him by your own heart; and what you feel for him, imagine he feels for you, my dear."

Though "*my dear*" is a trivial phrase, yet from certain people, and upon certain occasions, it is a phrase of infinite comfort and assurance. Mr. Sandford seldom said "*my dear*" to any one—to Miss Milner never; and upon this occasion, and from him, it was an expression most precious.

She turned to him with a look of gratitude: but as she only looked, and did not speak, he rose up, and soon after said, with a friendly tone he had seldom used in her presence, "I sincerely wish you a good night."

As soon as he was gone, Miss Milner exclaimed, "However my fate may have been precipitated by the unkindness of Mr. Sandford, yet, for that particle of concern which he has shown for me this evening, I will always be grateful to him."

"Ay," cried Mrs. Horton, "good Mr. Sandford may show his kindness now, without any danger from its consequences. Now Lord Elmwood is going away for ever, he is not afraid of your seeing him once again." And she thought she praised him by this suggestion.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN Miss Milner retired to her bedchamber, Miss Woodley went with her, nor would leave her the whole night; but in vain did she persuade her to rest—she absolutely refused; and declared she would never, from that hour, indulge repose. "The part I undertook to perform," cried she, "is over: I will now, for my whole life, appear in my own character, and give a loose to the anguish I endure."

As daylight showed itself—"And yet I might see him once again," said she; "I might see him within these two hours, if I pleased, for Mr. Sandford invited me."

"If you think, my dear Miss Milner," said Miss Woodley,

"that a second parting from Lord Elmwood would but give you a second agony, in the name of Heaven do not see him any more; but if you hope your mind would be easier, were you to bid each other adieu in a more direct manner than you did last night, let us go down and breakfast with him. I'll go before, and prepare him for your reception—you shall not surprise him—and I will let him know, it is by Mr. Sandford's invitation you are coming."

She listened with a smile to this proposal, yet objected to the indelicacy of her wishing to see him, after he had taken his leave; but as Miss Woodley perceived that she was inclined to infringe this delicacy, of which she had so proper a sense, she easily persuaded her it was impossible for the most suspicious person (and Lord Elmwood was far from such a character) to suppose that the paying him a visit at that period of time could be with the most distant imagination of regaining his heart, or of altering one resolution he had taken.

But though Miss Milner acquiesced in this opinion, yet she had not the courage to form the determination that she would go.

Daylight now no longer peeped, but stared upon them. Miss Milner went to the looking-glass, breathed upon her hands and rubbed them on her eyes, smoothed her hair, and adjusted her dress; yet said, after all, "I dare not see him again."

"You may do as you please," said Miss Woodley, "but I will. I that have lived for so many years under the same roof with him, and on the most friendly terms, and he going away, perhaps, for these ten years, perhaps for ever, I should think it a disrespect not to see him to the last moment of his remaining in the house."

"Then do you go," said Miss Milner, eagerly; "and if he should ask for me, I will gladly come, you know; but if he does not ask for me, I will not—and pray don't deceive me."

Miss Woodley promised her not to deceive her; and soon after, as they heard the servants pass about the house, and the clock had struck six, Miss Woodley went to the breakfast-room.

She found Lord Elmwood there in his travelling dress, standing pensively by the fire-place—and as he did not dream of seeing her, he started, when she entered, and, with an appearance of alarm, said, "Dear Miss Woodley, what's the matter?"—

She replied "Nothing, my Lord; but I could not be satisfied without seeing your Lordship once again, while I had it in my power."

"I thank you," he returned, with a sigh—the heaviest and most intelligent sigh she ever heard him condescend to give. She imagined, also, that he looked as if he wished to ask how Miss Milner did, but would not allow himself the indulgence. She was half inclined to mention her to him, and was debating in her mind whether she should or not, when Mr. Sandford came into the room saying, as he entered—

"For Heaven's sake, my Lord, where did you sleep last night?"

"Why do you ask?" said he.

"Because," replied Sandford, "I went into your bedchamber just now, and I found your bed made. You have not slept there to-night."

"I have slept nowhere," returned he: "I could not sleep; and having some papers to look over, and to set off early, I thought I might as well not go to bed at all."

Miss Woodley was pleased at the frank manner in which he made this confession, and could not resist the strong impulse to say, "You have done just then, my Lord, like Miss Milner; for she has not been in bed the whole night."

Miss Woodley spoke this in a negligent manner, and yet Lord Elmwood echoed back the words with solicitude, "Has not Miss Milner been in bed the whole night?"

"If she is up, why does she not come to take some coffee?" said Sandford, as he began to pour it out.

"If she thought it would be agreeable," returned Miss Woodley, "I dare say she would." And she looked at Lord Elmwood while she spoke, though she did not absolutely address him; but he made no reply.

"Agreeable!" returned Sandford, angrily: "has she then a quarrel with any body here? Or does she suppose any body here bears enmity to *her*? Is she not in peace and charity?"

"Yes," replied Miss Woodley; "that I am sure she is."

"Then bring her hither," cried Sandford, "directly. Would she have the wickedness to imagine we are not all friends with her?"

Miss Woodley left the room, and found Miss Milner almost in

despair, lest she should hear Lord Elmwood's carriage drive off before her friend's return.

"Did he send for me?" were the words she uttered as soon as she saw her.

"Mr. Sandford did, in his presence," returned Miss Woodley; "and you may go with the utmost decorum, or I would not tell you so."

She required no protestations of this, but readily followed her beloved adviser, whose kindness never appeared in so amiable a light as at that moment.

On entering the room, through all the dead white of her present complexion, she blushed to a crimson. Lord Elmwood rose from his seat, and brought a chair for her to sit down.

Sandford looked at her inquisitively, sipped his tea, and said, "He never made tea to his own liking."

Miss Milner took a cup, but had scarcely strength to hold it.

It seemed but a very short time they were at breakfast, when the carriage, that was to take Lord Elmwood away, drove to the door. Miss Milner started at the sound: so did he; but she had nearly dropped her cup and saucer; on which Sandford took them out of her hand, saying,—

"Perhaps you had rather have coffee?"

Her lips moved, but he could not hear what she said.

A servant came in, and told Lord Elmwood, "The carriage was at the door."

He replied, "Very well." But though he had breakfasted, he did not attempt to move.

At last, rising briskly, as if it was necessary to go in haste when he did go, he took up his hat, which he had brought with him into the room, and was turning to Miss Woodley to take his leave, when Sandford cried, "My Lord, you are in a great hurry." And then, as if he wished to give poor Miss Milner every moment he could, added (looking about), "I don't know where I have laid my gloves."

Lord Elmwood, after repeating to Miss Woodley his last night's farewell, now went up to Miss Milner, and taking one of her hands, again held it between his, but still without speaking; while she, unable to suppress her tears, as heretofore, suffered them to fall in torrents.

"What is all this?" cried Sandford, going up to them in anger.

They neither of them replied, or changed their situation.

"Separate this moment," cried Sandford, "or resolve never to be separated only by—death."

The commanding and awful manner in which he spoke this sentence, made them both turn to him in amazement, and, as it were, petrified with the sensation his words had caused.

He left them for a moment, and going to a small book-case in one corner of the room, took out of it a book, and, returning with it in his hand, said,—

"Lord Elmwood, do you love this woman?"

"More than my life," he replied, with the most heartfelt accents.

He then turned to Miss Milner:—"Can you say the same by him?"

She spread her hands over her eyes, and exclaimed, "Oh! heavens!"

"I believe you *can* say so," returned Sandford; "and in the name of God, and your own happiness, since this is the state of you both, let me put it out your of power to part."

Lord Elmwood gazed at him with wonder, and yet as if enraptured by the sudden change this conduct gave to his prospects.

She sighed with a kind of trembling ecstacy; while Sandford, with all the dignity of his official character, delivered these words:

"My Lord, while I thought my counsel might save you from the worst of misfortunes, conjugal strife, I importuned you hourly, and set forth your danger in the light it appeared to me. But though old, and a priest, I can submit to think I have been in an error; and I now firmly believe it is for the welfare of you both to become man and wife. My Lord, take this woman's marriage vows—you can ask no fairer promises of her reform—she can give you none half so sacred, half so binding; and I see by her looks that she will mean to keep them. And, my dear," continued he, addressing himself to her, "act but under the dominion of those vows towards a husband of sense and virtue like him, and you will be all that I, himself, or even Heaven can desire. Now, then, Lord Elmwood, this moment give her up for ever, or this moment constrain her, with the rites which I shall perform, by such ties from offending you, as she shall not *dare* to violate."

Lord Elmwood struck his forehead in doubt and agitation; but, still holding her hand, he cried, "I cannot part from her." Then feeling this reply as equivocal, he fell upon his knees and said, "Will you pardon my hesitation? And will you, in marriage, show me that tender love you have not shown me yet? Will you, in possession of all my affections, bear with all my infirmities?"

She raised him from her feet, and by the expression of her countenance, by the tears that bathed his hands, gave him confidence.

He turned to Sandford, then placing her by his own side, as the form of matrimony requires, gave this for a sign to Sandford that he should begin the ceremony. On which he opened his book, and—married them.

With voice and manners so serious, so solemn, and so fervent, he performed these holy rites, that every idea of jest, or even of lightness, was absent from the mind of the whole party present.

Miss Milner, covered with shame, sunk on the bosom of Miss Woodley.

When the ring was wanting, Lord Elmwood supplied it with one from his own hand; but throughout all the rest of the ceremony he appeared lost in zealous devotion to Heaven. Yet no sooner was it finished than his thoughts descended to this world. He embraced his bride with all the transport of the fondest, happiest bridegroom, and in raptures called her by the endearing name of "wife."

"But still, my Lord," cried Sandford, "you are only married by your own church and conscience, not by your wife's, or by the law of the land; and let me advise you not to defer that marriage long, lest in the time you should disagree, and she refuse to become your legal spouse."

"I think there is danger," returned Lord Elmwood, "and therefore our second marriage must take place to-morrow."

To this the ladies objected; and Sandford was to fix their second wedding-day, as he had done their first. He, after consideration, gave them four days.

Miss Woodley then recollected (for every one else had forgot it) that the carriage was still at the door to convey Lord Elmwood far away. It was was of course dismissed; and one

of those great incidents of delight which Miss Milner that morning tasted was to look out of the window, and see this very carriage drive from the door unoccupied.

Never was there a more rapid change from despair to happiness—to happiness perfect and supreme—than was that which Miss Milner and Lord Elmwood experienced in one single hour.

The few days that intervened between this and their second marriage were passed in the delightful care of preparing for that happy day; yet, with all its delights, inferior to the first, when every unexpected joy was doubled by the once expected sorrow.

Nevertheless, on that first wedding-day, that joyful day, which restored her lost lover to her hopes again; even on that *very* day, after the sacred ceremony was over, Miss Milner (with all the fears, the tremours, the superstition of her sex) felt an excruciating shock, when, looking on the ring Lord Elmwood had put upon her finger, in haste, when he married her, she perceived it was—a mourning ring.

CHAPTER XXX.

Not any event throughout life can arrest the reflection of a thoughtful mind more powerfully, or leave a more lasting impression, than that of returning to a place after a few years' absence, and observing an entire alteration, in respect to all the persons who once formed the neighbourhood:—to find that many, who but a few years before were left in their bloom of youth and health, are dead—to find that children left at school are married and have children of their own—that some who were left in riches are reduced to poverty—that others who were in poverty are become rich;—to find those once renowned for virtue now detested for vice—roving husbands grown constant—constant husbands become rovers—the firmest friends

changed to the most implacable enemies—beauty faded;—in a word, every change to demonstrate, that

“All is transitory on this side the grave.”

Guided by a wish that the reflecting reader may experience the sensation which an attention to circumstances like these must excite, he is desired to imagine seventeen years elapsed since he has seen or heard of any of those persons who, in the foregoing part of this narrative, have been introduced to his acquaintance; and then, supposing himself at the period of those seventeen years, follow the sequel of their history.

To begin with the first female object of this story:—The beautiful, the beloved Miss Milner—she is no longer beautiful—no longer beloved—no longer—tremble while you read it!—no longer—virtuous.

Dorriforth, the pious, the good, the tender Dorriforth, is become a hard-hearted tyrant;—the compassionate, the feeling, the just Lord Elmwood, an example of implacable rigour and injustice.

Miss Woodley is grown old, but less with years than grief.

The boy Rushbrook is become a man; and the apparent heir of Lord Elmwood's fortune; while his own daughter, his only child by his once-adored Miss Milner, he refuses ever to see again, in vengeance to her mother's crimes.

The least wonderful change is, the death of Mrs. Horton. Except

Sandford, who remains much the same as heretofore.

We left Lady Elmwood at the summit of human happiness—a loving and beloved bride. We now find her upon her death-bed.

At thirty-five, her “course was run;” a course full of perils, of hopes, of fears, of joys, and, at the end, of sorrows—all exquisite of their kind, for exquisite were the feelings of her susceptible heart.

At the commencement of this story, her father is described in the last moments of his life, with all his cares fixed upon her, his only child. How vain these cares! how vain every precaution that was taken for her welfare! She knows, she reflects upon this; and yet, impelled by that instinctive power which actuates a parent, Lady Elmwood on *her* dying day has no worldly thoughts, but

that of the future happiness of an only child. To every other prospect in her view, "Thy will be done!" is her continual exclamation; but where the misery of her daughter presents itself, the expiring penitent would there combat the will of Heaven.

To detail the progression by which vice gains a predominancy in the heart may be a useful lesson; but it is one so little to the gratification of most readers, that the degrees of misconduct by which Lady Elmwood fell are not meant to be related here; but instead of picturing every occasion of her fall, to come briefly to the events that followed.

There are, nevertheless, some articles under the former class, which ought not to be entirely omitted.

Lord Elmwood—after four years' enjoyment of the most perfect happiness that marriage could give, after becoming the father of a beautiful daughter, whom he loved with a tenderness almost equal to his love of her mother—was under the indispensable necessity of leaving them both for a time, in order to rescue from the depredation of his own steward his very large estates in the West Indies. His voyage was tedious; his residence there, from various accidents, was prolonged from time to time, till near three years had at length passed away. Lady Elmwood, at first only unhappy, became at last provoked; and giving way to that irritable disposition which she had so seldom governed, resolved, in spite of his injunctions, to divert the melancholy hours caused by his absence, by mixing in the gay circles of London.

Lord Elmwood at this time, and for many months before, had been detained abroad by a severe and dangerous illness, which a too cautious fear of her uneasiness had prompted him to conceal; and she received his frequent apologies for not returning with a suspicion and resentment they were calculated, but not intended, to inspire.

To violent anger succeeded a degree of indifference still more fatal. Lady Elmwood's heart was not formed for such a state: there, where all the tumultuous passions harboured by turns, one among them soon found the means to occupy all vacancies,—a passion, commencing innocently, but terminating in guilt. The dear object of her fondest, her truest affections, absent, far off; those affections painted the time so irksome that was past, so wearisome that which was still to come, that she

flew from the present tedious solitude to the dangerous society of one whose mind, depraved by fashionable vices, could not repay her for a moment's loss of him whose felicity she destroyed, whose dishonour she accomplished. Or if the delirium gave her a moment's recompense, what were her sufferings, her remorse, when she was awakened from the fleeting joy, by the arrival of her husband! Happy, transporting would have been that arrival but a few months sooner! As it would then have been unbounded happiness, it was now—but language affords no word that can describe Lady Elmwood's sensations, on being told her lord was arrived, and that necessity alone had so long delayed his return.

Guilty, but not hardened in her guilt, her pangs, her shame, were the more excessive. She fled from the place at his approach; fled from his house, never again to return to a habitation where he was the master. She did not, however, elope with her paramour, but escaped to shelter herself in the most dreary retreat; where she partook of no one comfort from society, or from life, but the still unremitting friendship of Miss Woodley. Even her infant daughter she left behind, nor would allow herself the consolation of her innocent, though reproachful, smiles. She left her in her father's house, that she might be under his virtuous protection; parted with her, as she thought, for ever, with all the agonies with which mothers part from their infant children: and yet those agonies were still more poignant on beholding the child sent after her, as the perpetual outcast of its father.

Lord Elmwood's love to his wife had been extravagant: the effect of his hate was the same. Beholding himself separated from her by a barrier not ever to be removed, he vowed, in the deep torments of his revenge, never to be reminded of her by one individual object; much less by one so near to her as her child. To bestow upon that child his affections, would be, he imagined, still, in some sort, to divide them with the mother. Firm in his resolution, the beautiful Matilda was, at the age of six years, sent out of her father's house; and received by her mother with all the tenderness, but with all the anguish, of those parents, who behold their offspring visited by the punishment due only to their own offences.

While this rigid act was executing by Lord Elmwood's agents

at his command, himself was engaged in an affair of still weightier importance—that of life or death. He determined upon his own death, or the death of the man who had wounded his honour and destroyed his happiness. A duel with his old antagonist was the result of this determination : nor was the Duke of Avon (who before the decease of his father and eldest brother was Lord Frederick Lawnley) averse from giving him all the satisfaction he required ; for it was no other than he, whose passion for Lady Elmwood had still subsisted, and whose address in gallantry left no means unattempted for the success of his designs—no other than he (who, next to Lord Elmwood, had been of all her lovers the most favoured) to whom Lady Elmwood sacrificed her own and her husband's future peace, and thus gave to his vanity a prouder triumph than if she had never bestowed her hand in marriage on another. This triumph, however, was but short : a month only, after the return of Lord Elmwood, the Duke was called upon to answer for his guilt, and was left on the ground where they met, so defaced with scars, as never again to endanger the honour of a husband. As Lord Elmwood was inexorable to all accommodation, their engagement had continued for a long space of time ; nor could any thing but the assurance that his opponent was slain have at last torn him from the field, though himself was dangerously wounded.

Yet even during the period of his danger, while for days he lay in the continual expectation of his own dissolution, not all the entreaties of his dearest, most intimate, and most respected friends, could prevail upon him to pronounce forgiveness of his wife, or to suffer them to bring his daughter to him for his last blessing.

Lady Elmwood, who was made acquainted with the minutest circumstance as it passed, appeared to wait the news of her husband's decease with patience : but upon her brow and in every lineament of her face was marked, that his death was an event she would not for a day survive ; and she would have left her child an orphan, in such a case, to have followed Lord Elmwood to the tomb. She was prevented the trial : he recovered ; and from the ample vengeance he had obtained upon the irresistible person of the Duke, he seemed, in a short time, to regain his tranquillity.

He recovered, but Lady Elmwood fell sick and languished. Possessed of youth to struggle with her woes, she still lingered on, till near ten years' decline had brought her to that period, with which the reader is now to be presented.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

In a lonely country on the borders of Scotland, a single house, by the side of a dreary heath, was the residence of the once gay, volatile Miss Milner. In a large gloomy apartment of this solitary habitation (the windows of which scarcely rendered the light accessible) was laid upon her death-bed the once lovely Lady Elmwood—pale, half-suffocated from the loss of breath; yet her senses perfectly clear and collected, which served but to sharpen the anguish of dying.

In one corner of the room, by the side of an old-fashioned settee, kneels Miss Woodley, praying most devoutly for her still beloved friend, but in vain endeavouring to pray composedly: floods of tears pour down her furrowed cheeks, and frequent sobs of sorrow break through each pious ejaculation.

Close by her mother's side, one hand supporting her head, the other drying from her face the cold dew of death, behold Lady Elmwood's daughter—Lord Elmwood's daughter too; yet he is far away, negligent of what either suffers. Lady Elmwood turns to her often, and attempts an embrace, but her feeble arms forbid, and they fall motionless. The daughter, perceiving these ineffectual efforts, has her whole face convulsed with grief: she kisses her mother, holds her to her bosom, and hangs upon her neck, as if she wished to cling there, not to be parted even by the grave.

On the other side of the bed sits Sandford, his hairs grown white, his face wrinkled with age, his heart the same as ever—the reprover, the enemy of the vain, the idle, and the wicked, but the friend and comforter of the forlorn and miserable.

Upon those features where sarcasm, reproach, and anger dwelt to threaten and alarm the sinner, mildness, tenderness,

and pity beamed, to support and console the penitent. Compassion changed his language, and softened all those harsh tones that used to denounce perdition.

"In the name of God," said he to Lady Elmwood, "of that God who suffered for you, and, suffering, knew and pitied all our weaknesses—by Him, who has given his word to take *compassion on the sinner's tears*, I bid you hope for mercy. By that innocence in which you once lived, be comforted; by the sorrows you have known since your degradation, hope, that in some measure, at least, you have atoned; by the sincerity that shone upon your youthful face when I joined your hand, and those thousand virtues you have since given proofs of, trust, that you were not born to die *the death of the wicked*."

As he spoke these words of consolation, her trembling hand clasped his—her dying eyes darted a ray of brightness—but her failing voice endeavoured in vain to articulate. At length, fixing her looks upon her daughter as their last dear object, she was just understood to utter the word, "Father."

"I understand you," replied Sandford; "and by all that influence I had ever over him, by my prayers, my tears," and they flowed as he spoke, "I will implore him to own his child."

She could now only smile in thanks.

"And if I should fail," continued he, "yet while I live she shall not want a friend or protector—all an old man, like me, can answer for——" here his grief interrupted him.

Lady Elmwood was sufficiently sensible of his words and their import to make a sign as if she wished to embrace him; but, finding her life leaving her fast, she reserved this last token of love for her daughter: with a struggle she lifted herself from her pillow, clung to her child, and died in her arms.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LORD ELMWOOD was by nature, and more from education, of a serious, thinking, and philosophic turn of mind. His religious studies had completely taught him to consider this world but as a passage to another; to enjoy with gratitude what Heaven in its bounty should bestow, and to bear with submission whatever in its vengeance it might inflict. In a greater degree than most people he practised this doctrine: and as soon as the shock which he received from Lady Elmwood's infidelity was abated, an entire calmness and resignation ensued; but still of that sensible and feeling kind, that could never suffer him to forget the happiness he had lost: and it was this sensibility which urged him to fly from its more keen recollection; and which he avowed as the reason why he would never permit Lady Elmwood, or even her child, to be named in his hearing. But this injunction (which all his friends, and even the servants in the house who attended his person, had received) was, by many people, suspected rather to proceed from his resentment than his tenderness: nor did he deny that resentment co-operated with his prudence; for prudence he called it, not to remind himself of happiness he could never taste again, and of ingratitude that might impel him to hatred: and prudence he called it, not to form another attachment near to his heart, more especially so near as a parent's, which might again expose him to all the torments of ingratitude from an object whom he affectionately loved.

Upon these principles he adopted the unshaken resolution never to acknowledge Lady Matilda as his child; or, acknowledging her as such, never to see, to hear of, or to take one concern whatever in her fate and fortune. The death of her mother appeared a favourable time, had he been so inclined, to have recalled this declaration which he had solemnly and repeatedly made. She was now destitute of the protection of her

other parent, and it became his duty, at least, to provide her a guardian, if he did not choose to take that tender title upon himself: but to mention either the mother or child to Lord Elmwood was an equal offence, and prohibited in the strongest terms to all his friends and household; and as he was an excellent good master, a sincere friend, and a most generous patron, not one of his acquaintance or dependents was hardy enough to incur his certain displeasure, which was always violent to excess, by even the official intelligence of Lady Elmwood's death.

Sandford himself, intimidated through age, or by the austere and morose manners which Lord Elmwood had of late years evinced—Sandford wished, if possible, that some other would undertake the dangerous task of recalling to his memory there ever was such a person as his wife. He advised Miss Woodley to write a proper letter to him on the subject; but she reminded him that such a step would be more perilous to her than to any other person, as she was the most destitute being on earth, without the benevolence of Lord Elmwood. The death of her aunt, Mrs. Horton, had left her solely relying on the bounty of Lady Elmwood, and now her death had left her totally dependent upon the Earl; for Lady Elmwood, though she had separate effects, had long before her demise declared it was not her intention to leave a sentence behind her in the form of a will. She had no will, she said, but what she would wholly submit to Lord Elmwood; and, if it were even his will that her child should live in poverty, as well as banishment, it should be so. But, perhaps, in this implicit submission to him, there was a distant hope that the necessitous situation of his daughter might plead more forcibly than his parental love; and that knowing her bereft of every support but through himself, that idea might form some little tie between them and be at least a token of the relationship.

But as Lady Elmwood anxiously wished this principle upon which she acted should be concealed from his suspicion, she included her friend, Miss Woodley, in the same fate; and thus the only persons dear to her she left, but at Lord Elmwood's pleasure, to be preserved from perishing in want. Her child was too young to advise her on this subject, her friend too disinterested; and at this moment they were both without the smallest means of subsistence, except through the justice or compassion of Lord Elmwood. Sandford had, indeed, promised his pro-

tection to the daughter; but his liberality had no other source than from his patron, with whom he still lived as usual, except during part of the winter, when the Earl resided in town: he then mostly stole a visit to Lady Elmwood. On this last visit he staid to see her buried.

After some mature deliberations, Sandford was now preparing to go to Lord Elmwood, at his house in town, and there to deliver himself the news that must sooner or later be told; and he meant also to venture, at the same time, to keep the promise he had made to his dying Lady. But the news reached his Lordship before Sandford arrived: it was announced in the public papers, and by that means first came to his knowledge.

He was breakfasting by himself, when the newspaper that first gave the intelligence of Lady Elmwood's death was laid before him. The paragraph contained these words:—

“On Wednesday last died, at Dring Park, a village in Northumberland, the Right Honourable Countess Elmwood. This Lady, who has not been heard of for many years in the fashionable world, was a rich heiress, and of extreme beauty; but although she received overtures from many men of the first rank, she preferred her guardian, the present Lord Elmwood (then Mr. Dorriforth) to them all; and it is said their marriage was followed by an uncommon share of felicity, till his Lordship, going abroad, and remaining there some time, the consequences (to a most captivating young woman left without a protector) were such as to cause a separation on his return. Her Ladyship has left one child by the Earl, a daughter, aged fifteen.”

Lord Elmwood had so much feeling upon reading this as to lay down the paper, and not take it up again for several minutes; nor did he taste his chocolate during this interval, but leaned his elbow on the table and rested his head upon his hand. He then rose up—walked two or three times across the room—sat down again—took up the paper—and read as usual. Nor let the vociferous mourner, or the perpetual weeper, here complain of his want of sensibility; but let them remember that Lord Elmwood was a man—a man of understanding—of courage—of fortitude—above all, a man of the nicest feelings; and who shall say but that at the time he leaned his head upon his hand, and rose to walk away the sense of what he felt, he

might not feel as much as Lady Elmwood did in her last moments ?

Be this as it may, his susceptibility on the occasion was not suspected by any one—yet he passed that day the same as usual ; the next day too, and the day after. On the morning of the fourth, he sent for his steward to his study, and after talking of other business, said to him,—

“Is it true that Lady Elmwood is dead ?”

“It is, my Lord.”

His Lordship looked unusually grave, and at this reply fetched an involuntary sigh.

“Mr. Sandford, my Lord,” continued the steward, “sent me word of the news, but left it to my own discretion, whether I would make your Lordship acquainted with it or not : I let him know I declined.”

“Where is Sandford ?” asked Lord Elmwood.

“He was with my Lady,” replied the steward.

“When she died ?” asked he.

“Yes, my Lord.”

“I am glad of it : he will see that every thing she desired is done. Sandford is a good man, and would be a friend to every body.”

“He is a very good man, indeed, my Lord.”

There was now a silence.—Mr. Giffard then, bowing, said, “Has your Lordship any further commands ?”

“Write to Sandford,” said Lord Elmwood, hesitating as he spoke, “and tell him to have every thing performed as she desired. And whoever she may have selected for the guardian of her child has my consent to act as such ; nor in one instance, where I myself am not concerned, shall I oppose her will.” The tears rushed into his eyes as he said this, and caused them to start in the steward’s : observing which, he sternly resumed,—

“Do not suppose from this conversation that any of those resolutions I have long since taken are or will be changed : they are the same, and shall continue inflexible.”

“I understand you, my Lord,” replied Mr. Giffard, “and that your express orders to me, as well as to every other person, remain just the same as formerly, never to mention this subject to you again.”

"They do, sir."

"My Lord, I always obeyed you, and I hope I always shall."

"I hope so too," he replied, in a threatening accent. "Write to Sandford," continued he, "to let him know my pleasure, and that is all you have to do."

The steward bowed and withdrew.

But before his letter arrived to Sandford, Sandford arrived in town; and Mr. Giffard related, word for word, what had passed between him and his Lord. Upon every occasion, and upon every topic, except that of Lady Elmwood and her child, Sandford was just as free with Lord Elmwood as he had ever been; and as usual (after his interview with the steward) went into his apartment without any previous notice. Lord Elmwood shook him by the hand, as upon all other meetings; and yet, whether his fear suggested it or not, Sandford thought he appeared more cool and reserved with him than formerly.

During the whole day, the slightest mention of Lady Elmwood, or of her child, was cautiously avoided; and not till the evening, after Sandford had risen to retire, and had wished Lord Elmwood good night, did he dare to mention the subject. He then, after taking leave, and going to the door, turned back and said, "My Lord——"

It was easy to guess on what he was preparing to speak: his voice failed, the tears began to trickle down his cheeks, he took out his handkerchief, and could proceed no farther.

"I thought," said Lord Elmwood, angrily,— "I thought I had given my orders upon the subject: did not my steward write them to you?"

"He did, my Lord," said Sandford, humbly; "but I was set out before they arrived."

"Has he not *told* you my mind, then?" cried he, more angrily still.

"He has," replied Sandford. "But——"

"But what, sir?" cried Lord Elmwood.

"Your Lordship," continued Sandford, "was mistaken in supposing that Lady Elmwood left a will. She left none."

"No will! no will at all!" returned he, surprised.

"No, my Lord," answered Sandford: "she wished every thing to be as you willed."

"She left me all the trouble, then, you mean?"

"No great trouble, sir; for there are but two persons whom she has left behind her, to hope for your protection."

"And who are those two?" cried he, hastily.

"One, my Lord, I need not name: the other is Miss Woodley."

There was a delicacy and humility in the manner in which Sandford delivered this reply, that Lord Elmwood could *not* resent, and he only returned,—

"Miss Woodley—is she yet living?"

"She is: I left her at the house I came from."

"Well, then," answered he, "you must see that my steward provides for those two persons. That care I leave to you; and should there be any complaints, on you they fall."

Sandford bowed, and was going.

"And now," resumed Lord Elmwood, in a more stern voice, "let me never hear again on this subject. You have here the power to act in regard to the persons you have mentioned; and upon you their situation, the care, the whole management of them depends; but be sure you never let them be named before me, from this moment."

"Then," said Sandford, "as this must be the last time they are mentioned, I must now take the opportunity to disburden my mind of a charge——"

"What charge?" cried Lord Elmwood, morosely, interrupting him.

"Though Lady Elmwood, my Lord, left no will behind her, she left a request."

"A request!" said he, starting. "If it is for me to see her daughter, I tell you now, before you ask, that I will not grant it; for, by Heaven (and he spoke and looked most solemnly), though I have no resentment against the innocent child, and wish her happy, yet I will never see her. Never, for her mother's sake, suffer my heart again to be softened by an object I might dote upon. Therefore, sir, if that is the request, it is already answered: my will is fixed."

"The request, my Lord," replied Sandford (and he took out a pocket-book, from whence he drew several papers), "is contained in this letter; nor do I rightly know what its contents are;" and he held it, timorously, out to him.

"Is it Lady Elmwood's writing?" asked Lord Elmwood, extremely discomposed.

"It is, my Lord: she wrote it a few days before she died, and enjoined me to deliver it to you with my own hands."

"I refuse to read it," cried he, putting it from him, and trembling while he did so.

"She desired me," said Sandford (still presenting the letter), "to conjure you to read it—for *her father's sake*."

Lord Elmwood took it instantly. But as soon as it was in his hand, he seemed distressed to know what he should do with it—in what place to go and read it—or how to fortify himself against its contents. He appeared ashamed, too, that he had been so far prevailed upon; and said, by way of excuse,—

"For Mr. Milner's sake I would do much; nay, any thing but that to which I have just now sworn never to consent. For his sake I have borne a great deal: for his sake alone his daughter died my wife. You know no other motive than respect for him prevented my divorce. Pray (and he hesitated), was she buried by him?"

"No, my Lord: she expressed no such desire; and as that was the case, I did not think it necessary to carry the corpse so far."

At the word corpse, Lord Elmwood shrunk, and looked shocked beyond measure; but, recovering himself, said, "I am sorry for it;—for he loved *her* sincerely, if she did not love him—and I wish they had been buried together."

"It is not, then, too late," said Sandford, and was going on, but the other interrupted him.

"No, no—we will have no disturbing of the dead."

"Read her letter, then," said Sandford, "and bid her rest in peace."

"If it is in my power," returned he, "to grant what she asks, I will; but if her demand is what I apprehend, I cannot—I will not—bid her rest by complying. You know my resolution—my disposition—and take care how you provoke me. You may do an injury to the very person you are seeking to befriend: the very maintenance I mean to allow her daughter, I can withdraw."

Poor Sandford, all alarmed at this menace, replied with

energy, "My Lord, unless you begin the subject, I never shall presume to mention it again."

"I take you at your word; and in consequence of that, but of that alone, we are friends. Good night, sir."

Sandford bowed with humility, and they went to their separate bedchambers.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AFTER Lord Elmwood had retired into his chamber, it was some time before he read the letter Sandford had given him. He first walked backwards and forwards in the room; he then began to take off some part of his dress, but he did it slowly. At length he dismissed his valet, and sitting down, took the letter from his pocket. He looked at the seal, but not at the direction; for he seemed to dread seeing Lady Elmwood's hand-writing. He then laid it on the table, and began again to undress. He did not proceed, but, taking up the letter quickly (with a kind of effort in making the resolution), broke it open. These were its contents:—

"My Lord,

"Who writes this letter I well know—I well know to whom it is addressed—I feel with the most powerful force both our situations; nor should I dare to offer you even this humble petition, but that, at the time you receive it, there will be no such person as I am in existence.

"For myself, then, all concern will be over; but there is a care that pursues me to the grave, and threatens my want of repose even there.

"I leave a child: I will not call her mine—that has undone her: I will not call her yours—that will be of no avail. I present her before you as the granddaughter of Mr. Milner. Oh! do not refuse an asylum, even in your own house, to the destitute offspring of your friend—the last and only remaining branch of his family.

"Receive her into your household, be her condition there ever so abject. I cannot write distinctly what I would—my senses are not impaired, but the powers of expression are. The complaint of the unfortunate child in the Scriptures (a lesson I have studied), has made this wish cling fast to my heart, that, without the distant hope of its being fulfilled, death would have more terrors than my weak mind could support.

"I will go to my father. How many servants live in my father's house, and are fed with plenty, while I starve in a foreign land."

"I do not ask a parent's festive rejoicing at her approach—I do not even ask her father to behold her; but let her live under his protection. For her grandfather's sake do not refuse this—to the child of his child, whom he entrusted to your care—do not refuse it.

"Be her host; I remit the tie of being her parent. Never see her—but let her sometimes live under the same roof with you.

"It is Miss Milner, your ward, to whom you never refused a request, who supplicates you—not now for your nephew, Rushbrook, but for one so much more dear that a denial—she dares not suffer her thoughts to glance that way—she will hope—and in that hope bids you farewell, with all the love she ever bore you.

"Farewell, Dorriforth. Farewell, Lord Elmwood—and before you throw this letter from you with contempt or anger, cast your imagination into the grave where I am lying. Reflect upon all the days of my past life—the anxious moments I have known, and what has been their end. Behold *me*, also: in my altered face there is no anxiety—no joy or sorrow—all is over. My whole frame is motionless—my heart beats no more. Look at my horrid habitation, too,—and ask yourself, whether I am an object of resentment."

While Lord Elmwood read this letter, it trembled in his hand: he once or twice wiped the tears from his eyes as he read, and once laid the letter down for a few minutes. At its conclusion, the tears flowed fast down his face: but he seemed both ashamed and angry they did, and was going to throw the paper upon the fire. He, however, suddenly checked his hand; and, putting it hastily into his pocket, went to bed.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE next morning, when Lord Elmwood and Sandford met at breakfast, the latter was pale with fear for the success of Lady Elmwood's letter: the Earl was pale too, but there was besides upon his face something which evidently marked he was displeased. Sandford observed it, and was all humbleness, both in his words and looks, in order to soften him.

As soon as the breakfast was removed, Lord Elmwood drew the letter from his pocket, and holding it towards Sandford, said,—

"That may be of more value to you than it is to me; therefore I give it you."

Sandford called up a look of surprise, as if he did not know the letter again.

"'Tis Lady Elmwood's letter," said Lord Elmwood, "and I return it to you for two reasons."

Sandford took it, and, putting it up, asked fearfully, "what those two reasons were."

"First," said he, "because I think it is a relick you may like to preserve. My second reason is, that you may show it to her daughter, and let her know why, and on what conditions, I grant her mother's request."

"You *do* then grant it?" cried Sandford, joyfully: "I thank you—you are kind—you are considerate."

"Be not hasty in your gratitude: you may have cause to recall it."

"I know what you have said," replied Sandford: "you have said you grant Lady Elmwood's request—you cannot recall these words, nor I my gratitude."

"Do you know what her request is?" returned he.

"Not exactly, my Lord: I told you before I did not; but it is, no doubt, something in favour of her child."

"I think not," he replied. "Such as it is, however, I grant

it; but in the strictest sense of the word—no farther—and one neglect of my commands releases me from this promise totally.”

“We will take care, Sir, not to disobey them.”

“Then listen to what they are; for to you I give the charge of delivering them again. Lady Elmwood has petitioned me, in the name of her father (a name I reverence), to give his grandchild the sanction of my protection;—in the literal sense, to suffer that she may reside at one of my seats; dispensing, at the same time, with my ever seeing her.”

“And you will comply?”

“I will, till she encroaches on this concession, and dares to hope for a greater;—I will, while she avoids my sight, or the giving me any remembrance of her. But if, whether by design or by accident, I ever see or hear from her, that moment my compliance to her mother’s supplication ceases, and I abandon her once more.”

Sandford sighed. Lord Elmwood continued,—

“I am glad her request stopped where it did. I would rather comply with her desires than not; and I rejoice they are such as I can grant with ease and honour to myself. I am seldom now at Elmwood Castle: let her daughter go there. The few weeks or months I am down in the summer, she may easily, in that extensive house, avoid me: while she does, she lives in security—when she does not—you know my resolution.”

Sandford bowed:—the Earl resumed,—

“Nor can it be a hardship to obey this command: she cannot lament the separation from a parent whom she never knew——” Sandford was going eagerly to prove the error of that assertion; but he prevented him, by saying, “In a word—without farther argument—if she obeys me in this, I will provide for her as my daughter during my life, and leave her a fortune at my death; but if she dares——”

Sandford interrupted the menace prepared for utterance, saying, “And you still mean, I suppose, to make Mr. Rushbrook your heir?”

“Have you not heard me say so? And do you imagine I have changed my determination? I am not given to alter my resolutions, Mr. Sandford; and I thought you knew I was not: be-

sides, will not my title be extinct, whoever I make my heir? Could any thing but a son have preserved my title?"

"Then it is yet possible——"

"By marrying again, you mean? — No—no—I have had enough of marriage; and Henry Rushbrook I shall leave my heir. Therefore, sir——"

"My Lord, I do not presume——"

"Do not, Sandford, and we may still be good friends. But I am not to be controlled as formerly: my temper is changed of late—changed to what it was originally, till your religious precepts reformed it. You may remember how troublesome it was to conquer my stubborn disposition in my youth: *then*, indeed, you *did*; but in my more advanced age, you will find the task too difficult."

Sandford again repeated, "He should not presume——"

To which Lord Elmwood again made answer, "Do not, Sandford;" and added, "for I have a sincere regard for you, and should be loath, at these years, to quarrel with you seriously."

Sandford turned away his head, to conceal his feelings.

"Nay, if we do quarrel," resumed Lord Elmwood, "you know it must be your own fault; and as this is a theme the most likely of any, nay, the only one on which we can have a difference (such as we cannot forgive), take care never from this day to renew it. Indeed, that of itself would be an offence I could not pardon. I have been clear and explicit in all I have said; there can be no fear of mistaking my meaning; therefore, all future explanation is unnecessary: nor will I permit a word, or a hint on the subject from any one, without showing my resentment even to the hour of my death." He was going out of the room—

"But before we bid adieu to the subject for ever, my Lord—there was another person whom I named to you——"

"Do you mean Miss Woodley? Oh, by all means let her live at Elmwood House too. On consideration, I have no objection to see Miss Woodley at any time; I shall be glad to see her. Do not let *her* be frightened at me: to her I shall be the same that I have always been."

"She is a good woman, my Lord," cried Sandford, delighted.

"You need not tell me that, Mr. Sandford: I know her worth." And he left the room.

Sandford, to relieve Miss Woodley and her lovely charge from the suspense in which he had left them, prepared to set off for their habitation, and meant himself to conduct them from thence to Elmwood Castle, and appoint some retired part of it for Lady Matilda, against the annual visit which her father should pay there. To confirm this caution, before he left London, Giffard, the steward, took an opportunity to wait upon him, and let him know that his Lord had acquainted him with the consent he had given for his daughter to be admitted at Elmwood Castle, and upon what restrictions; that he had farther uttered the severest threats, should these restrictions ever be infringed. Sandford thanked Giffard for his friendly information. It served him as a second warning of the circumspection that was necessary; and having taken leave of his friend and patron, under the pretence that "he could not live in the smoke of London," he set out for the north.

It is unnecessary to say with what joy Sandford was received by Miss Woodley and the hapless daughter of Lady Elmwood, even before he told his errand. They both loved him sincerely; more especially Lady Matilda, whose forlorn state, and innocent sufferings, had ever excited his compassion, and caused him to treat her with affection, tenderness, and respect. She knew, too, how much she had been her mother's friend; for that she also loved him; and for his being honoured with the friendship of her father, she looked up to him with reverence. For Matilda (with an excellent understanding, a sedateness above her years, and having been early accustomed to the private converse between Lady Elmwood and Miss Woodley), was perfectly acquainted with the whole fatal history of her mother; and was, by her, taught the esteem and admiration of her father's virtues which they so justly merited.

Notwithstanding the joy of Mr. Sandford's presence, once more to cheer their solitary dwelling, no sooner were the first kind greetings over, than the dread of what he might have to inform them of possessed poor Matilda and Miss Woodley so powerfully, that all their gladness was changed into affright. Their apprehensions were far more forcible than their curiosity: they dared not to ask a question, and even began to wish he would continue silent upon the subject on which they feared to listen. For near two hours he was so. At length, after a short inter-

val from speaking (during which they waited with anxiety for what he might next say), he turned to Lady Matilda, and said,—

“You don’t ask for your father, my dear?”

“I did not know it was proper,” she replied, timidly.

“It is always proper,” answered Sandford, “for *you* to think of him, though he should never think on you.”

She burst into tears, and said that she *did* think of him, but she felt an apprehension of mentioning his name.” And she wept bitterly while she spoke.

“Do not think I reproved you,” said Sandford: “I only told you what was right.”

“Nay,” said Miss Woodley, “she does not weep for that: she fears her father has not complied with her mother’s request; perhaps, not even read her letter.”

“Yes, he *has* read it,” returned Sandford.

“Oh, heavens!” exclaimed Matilda, clasping her hands together, and the tears falling still faster.

“Do not be so much alarmed, my dear,” said Miss Woodley: “you know we are prepared for the worst; and you know you promised your mother, whatever your fate should be, to submit with patience.”

“Yes,” replied Matilda; “and I am prepared for every thing but my father’s refusal to my dear mother.”

“Your father has not refused your mother’s request,” replied Sandford.

She was leaping from her seat in ecstasy.

“But,” continued he, “do you know what her request was?”

“Not entirely,” replied Matilda; “and since it is granted I am careless. But she told me her letter concerned none but me.”

To explain perfectly to Matilda Lady Elmwood’s letter, and that she might perfectly understand upon what terms she was admitted into Elmwood Castle, Sandford now read the letter to her; and repeated, as nearly as he could remember, the whole of the conversation that passed between Lord Elmwood and himself; not even sparing, through an erroneous delicacy, any of those threats her father had denounced, should she dare to transgress the limits he prescribed—nor did he try to soften, in one instance, a word he uttered. She listened, sometimes with tears, sometimes with hope, but always with awe, and with

terror, to every sentence in which her father was concerned. Once she called him cruel—then exclaimed “he was kind;” but at the end of Sandford’s intelligence concluded “that she was happy, and grateful for the boon bestowed.” Even her mother had not a more exalted idea of Lord Elmwood’s worth than his daughter had formed; and this little bounty just obtained would not have been greater in her mother’s estimation than it was now in hers. Miss Woodley, too, smiled at the prospect before her: she esteemed Lord Elmwood beyond any mortal living: she was proud to hear what he had said in her praise, and overjoyed at the expectation of being once again in his company; painting at the same time a thousand bright hopes, from watching every emotion of his soul, and catching every proper occasion to excite or increase his paternal sentiments. Yet she had the prudence to conceal those vague hopes from his child, lest a disappointment might prove fatal; and assuming a behaviour neither too much elated nor depressed, she advised that they should hope for the best, but yet, as usual, expect and prepare for the worst.—After taking measures for quitting their melancholy abode, within the fortnight they all departed for Elmwood Castle; Matilda, Miss Woodley, and even Sandford, first visiting Lady Elmwood’s grave, and bedewing it with their tears.

CHAPTER XXXV.

It was on a dark evening, in the month of March, that Lady Matilda, accompanied by Sandford and Miss Woodley, arrived at Elmwood Castle, the magnificent seat of her father. Sandford chose the evening, rather to steal into the house privately, than by any appearance of parade to suffer Lord Elmwood to be reminded of their arrival by the public prints, or by any other accident. Nor would he give the neighbours or servants reason to suppose the daughter of their Lord was admitted into his house in any other situation than that in which she really was permitted to be there.

As the porter opened the gates of the avenue to the carriage that brought them, Matilda felt an awful and yet gladsome sensation, which no terms can describe. As she entered the door of the mansion this sensation increased—and as she passed along the spacious hall, the splendid staircase, and many stately apartments, wonder, with a crowd of the tenderest, yet most afflicting sentiments, rushed to her heart. She gazed with astonishment! she reflected with still more.

“And is *my father* the master of this house?” she cried—“and was my mother once the mistress of this castle?” Here tears relieved her from a part of that burden which was before insupportable.

“Yes,” replied Sandford, “and you are the mistress of it now till your father arrives.”

“Good Heaven!” exclaimed she, “and will he ever arrive? And shall I live to sleep under the same roof with my father?”

“My dear,” replied Miss Woodley, “have not you been told so?”

“Yes,” said she; “but though I heard it with extreme pleasure, yet the expectation never so forcibly affected me as at this moment. I now feel, as the reality approaches, that to be admitted here, is kindness enough: I do not ask for more—I am now convinced, from what this trial makes me feel, that to see my father would occasion emotions I could not perhaps survive.”

The next morning gave to Matilda more objects of admiration and wonder, as she walked over the extensive gardens, groves, and other pleasure grounds belonging to the house. She, who had never been beyond the dreary ruinous places which her deceased mother had made her residence, was naturally struck with amazement and delight at the grandeur of a seat which travellers came for miles to see, nor thought their time mispent.

There was one object, however, among all she saw, which attracted her attention above the rest, and she would stand for hours to look at it. This was a whole-length portrait of Lord Elmwood, esteemed a very capital picture, and a perfect likeness. To this picture she would sigh and weep; though, when it was first pointed out to her, she shrunk back with fear, and it was some time before she dared venture to cast her eyes completely

upon it. In the features of her father she was proud to discern the exact mould in which her own appeared to have been modelled; yet Matilda's person, shape, and complexion were so extremely like what her mother's once were, that at the first glance she appeared to have a still greater resemblance of her than of her father: but her mind and manners were all Lord Elmwood's; softened by the delicacy of her sex, the extreme tenderness of her heart, and the melancholy of her situation.

She was now in her seventeenth year: of the same age, within a year and a few months, of her mother when she first became the ward of Dorriforth. She was just three years old when her father went abroad, and remembered something of bidding him farewell; but more of taking cherries from his hand, as he pulled them from the tree to give to her.

Educated in the school of adversity, and inured to retirement from her infancy, she had acquired a taste for all those amusements which a recluse life affords. She was fond of walking and riding; was accomplished in the arts of music and drawing, by the most careful instructions of her mother; and as a scholar, she excelled most of her sex, from the pains which Sandford had taken with that part of her education, and the superior abilities he possessed for the task.

In devoting certain hours of the day to study with him, others to music, riding, and such harmless recreations, Matilda's time never appeared tedious at Elmwood Castle, although she received and paid no one visit: for it was soon divulged in the neighbourhood upon what stipulation she resided at her father's, and studiously intimated that the most prudent and friendly behaviour of her true friends would be, to take no notice whatever that she lived among them; and as Lord Elmwood's will was a law all around, such was the consequence of that will, known, or merely supposed.

Neither did Miss Woodley regret the want of visitors, but found herself far more satisfied in her present situation than her most sanguine hopes could have formed. She had a companion whom she loved with an equal fondness with which she had loved her deceased mother; and frequently, in this charming habitation, where she had so often beheld Lady Elmwood, her imagination represented Matilda as her friend risen from the grave, in her former youth, health, and exquisite beauty.

In peace, in content, though not in happiness, the days and weeks passed away, till about the middle of August, when preparations began to be made for the arrival of Lord Elmwood. The week in which he was to come was at length fixed, and some part of his retinue was arrived before him. When this was told Matilda, she started, and looked just as her mother at her age had often done, when, in spite of her love, she was conscious that she had offended him, and was terrified at his approach. Sandford, observing this involuntary emotion, put out his hand, and, taking hers, shook it kindly; and bade her (but it was not in a cheering tone) "not be afraid." This gave her no confidence: and she began, before her father's arrival, to seclude herself in the apartments allotted for her during the time of his stay; and in the timorous expectation of his coming, her appetite declined, and she lost all her colour. Even Miss Woodley, whose spirits had been for some time elated with the hopes she had formed, from his residence at the castle, on drawing near to the test, found those hopes vanished; and though she endeavoured to conceal it, she was full of apprehensions. Sandford had certainly fewer fears than either; yet upon the eve of the day on which his patron was to arrive, he was evidently cast down.

Lady Matilda once asked him, "Are you certain, Mr. Sandford, you made no mistake in respect to what Lord Elmwood said, when he granted my mother's request? Are you sure he *did* grant it? Was there nothing equivocal on which he may ground his displeasure, should he be told that I am here? Oh, do not let me hazard being once again turned out of this house! Oh, save me from provoking him perhaps to execrate me!" And here she clasped her hands together with the most fervent petition, in the dread of what might happen.

"If you doubt my words or my senses," said Sandford, "call Giffard, who is just arrived, and let him inform you: the same words were repeated to him as to me."

Though from her reason, Matilda could not doubt of any mistake from Mr. Sandford, yet her fears suggested a thousand scruples; and this reference to the steward she received with the utmost satisfaction (though she did not think it necessary to apply to him), as it perfectly convinced her of the folly of the suspicions she had entertained.

"And yet, Mr. Sandford," said she, "if it is so, why are you less cheerful than you were? I cannot help thinking but it must be the expected arrival of Lord Elmwood which has occasioned this change."

"I don't know," replied Sandford, carelessly; "but I believe I am grown afraid of your father. His temper is a great deal altered from what it once was: he raises his voice, and uses harsh expressions upon the least provocation: his eyes flash lightning, and his face is distorted with anger upon the slightest motives: he turns away his old servants at a moment's warning, and no concession can make their peace. In a word, I am more at my ease when I am away from him; and I really believe," added he with a smile, but with a tear at the same time,—"*I really believe, I am more afraid of him in my age, than he was of me when he was a boy.*"

Miss Woodley was present: she and Matilda looked at one another; and each of them saw the other turn pale at this description.

The day at length came on which Lord Elmwood was expected to dinner. It would have been a high gratification to his daughter to have gone to the topmost window of the house, and have only beheld his carriage enter the avenue; but it was a gratification which her fears, her tremour, her extreme sensibility, would not permit her to enjoy.

Miss Woodley and she sat down that day to dinner in their retired apartments, which were detached from the other part of the house by a gallery; and of the door leading to the gallery they had a key, to impede any one from passing that way, without first ringing a bell; to answer which was the sole employment of a servant, who was placed there during the Earl's residence, lest by any accident he might chance to come near that unfrequented part of the house: on which occasion the man was to give immediate notice to his Lady, so as she might avoid his presence by retiring to an inner room.

Matilda and Miss Woodley sat down to dinner, but did not dine. Sandford dined, as usual, with Lord Elmwood. When tea was brought, Miss Woodley asked the servant, who attended, if he had seen his Lord. The man answered, "Yes, madam; and he looks vastly well." Matilda wept with joy to hear it.

About nine in the evening, Sandford rang at the bell, and

was admitted: never had he been so welcome. Matilda hung upon him as if his recent interview with her father had endeared him to her more than ever; and staring anxiously in his face, seemed to enquire of him something about Lord Elmwood, and something that should not alarm her.

"Well—how do you find yourself?" said he to her.

"How are you, Mr. Sandford?" she returned, with a sigh.

"Oh, very well," replied he.

"Is my Lord in a good temper?" asked Miss Woodley.

"Yes, very well," replied Sandford, with indifference.

"Did he seem glad to see you?" asked Matilda.

"He shook me by the hand," replied Sandford.

"That was a sign he was glad to see you—was it not?" said Matilda.

"Yes; but he could not do less."

"Nor more," replied she.

"He looks very well, our servant tells us," said Miss Woodley.

"Extremely well, indeed," answered Sandford; "and to tell the truth, I never saw him in better spirits."

"That is well," said Matilda, and sighed a weight of fears from her heart.

"Where is he now, Mr. Sandford?"

"Gone to take a walk about his grounds, and I stole here in the mean time."

"What was your conversation during dinner?" asked Miss Woodley.

"Horses, hay, farming, and politics."

"Won't you sup with him?"

"I shall see him again before I go to bed."

"And again to-morrow?" cried Matilda: "what happiness!"

"He has visitors to-morrow," said Sandford, "coming for a week or two."

"Thank Heaven," said Miss Woodley: "he will then be diverted from thinking on us."

"Do you know," returned Sandford, "it is my firm opinion, that his thinking of ye at present is the cause of his good spirits."

"Oh, heavens!" cried Matilda, lifting up her hands with rapture.

"Nay, do not mistake me," said Sandford: "I would not have you build a foundation for joy upon this surmise; for if he is in spirits that you are in this house—so near him—positively under his protection—yet he will not allow himself to think it is the cause of his content; and the sentiments he has adopted, and which are now become natural to him, will remain the same as ever: nay, perhaps with greater force, should he suspect his weakness, as he calls it, acting in opposition to them."

"If he does but think of me with tenderness," cried Matilda, "I am recompensed."

"And what recompense would his kind thoughts be to you," said Sandford, "were he to turn you out to beggary?"

"A great deal—a great deal," she replied.

"But how are you to know he has these kind thoughts, if he gives you no proof of them?"

"No, Mr. Sandford; but *supposing* we could know them without proof."

"But as that is impossible," answered he, "I shall suppose, till proof appears, that I have been mistaken in my conjectures."

Matilda looked deeply concerned that the argument should conclude in her disappointment; for to have believed herself thought of with tenderness by her father, would have alone constituted her happiness.

When the servant came up with something by way of supper, he told Mr. Sandford that his Lord was returned from his walk, and had enquired for him. Sandford immediately made his companions good night, and left them.

"How strange is this!" cried Matilda, when Miss Woodley and she were alone. "My father within a few rooms of me, and yet I am debarred from seeing him! Only by walking a few paces I could be at his feet, and perhaps receive his blessing!"

"You make me shudder," cried Miss Woodley; "but some spirits less timid than mine might perhaps advise you to the experiment!"

"Not for worlds!" returned Matilda: "no counsel could tempt me to such temerity; and yet to entertain the thought that it is possible I could do this, is a source of infinite comfort."

This conversation lasted till bedtime, and later; for they sat up beyond their usual hour to indulge in.

Miss Woodley slept little, but Matilda less: she awaked repeatedly during the night, and every time sighed to herself, "I sleep in the same house with my father! Blessed spirit of my mother, look down and rejoice."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE next day the whole castle appeared to Lady Matilda (though she was in some degree retired from it) all tumult and bustle, as was usually the case while Lord Elmwood was there. She saw from her windows the servants running across the yards and park; horses and carriages driving with fury; all the suite of a nobleman; and it sometimes elated, at other times depressed her.

These impressions, however, and others of fear and anxiety, which her father's arrival had excited, by degrees wore off; and after some little time she was in the same tranquil state that she enjoyed before he came.

He had visitors, who passed a week or two with him; he paid visits himself for several days; and thus the time stole away, till it was about four weeks from the time that he had arrived: in which long period Sandford, with all his penetration, could never clearly discover whether he had once called to mind that his daughter was living in the same house. He had not once named her (that was not extraordinary); consequently no one dared name her to him; but he had not even mentioned Miss Woodley, of whom he had so lately spoken in the kindest terms, and had said, "he should take pleasure in seeing her again." From these contradictions in Lord Elmwood's behaviour in respect to her, it was Miss Woodley's plan neither to throw herself in his way, nor avoid him. She therefore frequently walked about the house while he was in it, not indeed entirely without restraint, but at least with the show of liberty. This freedom, indulged for some time without peril, became at last less cautious; and as no ill consequences had arisen from its practice, her scruples gradually ceased.

One morning, however, as she was crossing the large hall, thoughtless of danger, a footstep at a distance alarmed her, almost without knowing why. She stopped for a moment, thinking to return: the steps approached quicker; and before she could retreat, she beheld Lord Elmwood at the other end of the hall, and perceived that he saw her. It was too late to hesitate what was to be done: she could not go back, and had not courage to go on; she therefore stood still. Disconcerted, and much affected at his sight (their former intimacy coming to her mind, with the many years, and many sad occurrences passed, since she last saw him), all her intentions, all her meditated schemes how to conduct herself on such an occasion, gave way to a sudden shock: and to make the meeting yet more distressing, her very fright, she knew, would serve to recall more powerfully to his mind the subject she most wished him to forget. The steward was with him; and as they came up close by her side, Giffard observing him look at her earnestly, said softly, but so as she heard him, "My Lord, it is Miss Woodley." Lord Elmwood took off his hat instantly, and, with an apparent friendly warmth, laying hold of her hand, he said, "Indeed, Miss Woodley, I did not know you; I am very glad to see you:" and while he spoke, shook her hand with a cordiality which her tender heart could not bear; and never did she feel so hard a struggle to restrain her tears. But the thought of Matilda's fate, the idea of awakening in his mind a sentiment that might irritate him against his child, wrought more forcibly than every other effort; and though she could not reply distinctly, she replied without weeping. Whether he saw her embarrassment, and wished to release her from it, or was in haste to conceal his own, he left her almost instantly; but not till he had entreated she would dine that very day with him and Mr. Sandford, who were to dine without other company. She courtesied assent, and flew to tell Matilda what had occurred. After listening with anxiety and with joy to all she told, Matilda laid hold of that hand which she said Lord Elmwood had held, and pressed it to her lips with love and reverence.

When Miss Woodley made her appearance at dinner, Sandford (who had not seen her since the invitation, and did not know of it), looked amazed; on which Lord Elmwood said, "Do you know, Sandford, I met Miss Woodley this morning;

and, had it not been for Giffard, I should have passed her without knowing her.—But, Miss Woodley, if I am not so much altered but that you knew me, I take it unkind you did not speak first.” She was unable to speak even now: he saw it, and changed the conversation; when Sandford eagerly joined in discourse, which relieved him from the pain of the former.

As they advanced in their dinner, the embarrassment of Miss Woodley and of Mr. Sandford diminished; Lord Elmwood, in his turn, became, not embarrassed, but absent and melancholy. He now and then sighed heavily; and called for wine much oftener than he was accustomed.

When Miss Woodley took her leave, he invited her to dine with him and Sandford whenever it was convenient to her: he said, besides, many things of the same kind, and all with the utmost civility, yet not with that warmth with which he had spoken in the morning: into *that* he had been surprised; his coolness was the effect of reflection.

When she came to Lady Matilda, and Sandford had joined them, they talked and deliberated on what had passed.

“You acknowledge, Mr. Sandford,” said Miss Woodley, “that you think my presence affected Lord Elmwood, so as to make him much more thoughtful than usual: if you imagine these thoughts were upon Lady Elmwood, I will never intrude again; but if you suppose that I made him think upon his daughter, I cannot go too often.”

“I don’t see how he can divide these two objects in his mind,” replied Sandford; “therefore you must e’en visit him on, and take your chance, what reflections you may cause; but, be they what they will, time will steal away from you that power of affecting him.”

She concurred in the opinion, and occasionally she walked into Lord Elmwood’s apartments, dined, or took her coffee with him, as the accident suited; and observed, according to Sandford’s prediction, that time wore off the impression her visits first made. Lord Elmwood now became just the same before her as before others. She easily discerned, too, through all that politeness which he assumed, that he was no longer the considerate, the forbearing character he formerly was; but haughty, impatient, imperious, and more than ever *implacable*.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHEN Lord Elmwood had been at his country seat about six weeks, Mr. Rushbrook, his nephew, and his adopted child—that friendless boy whom Lady Elmwood first introduced into his uncle’s house, and by her kindness preserved there—arrived from his travels, and was received by his uncle with all the marks of affection due to the man he thought worthy to be his heir. Rushbrook had been a beautiful boy, and was now an extremely handsome young man: he had made unusual progress in his studies; had completed the tour of Italy and Germany, and returned home with the air and address of a perfect man of fashion. There was, besides, an elegance and persuasion in his manner almost irresistible. Yet with all those accomplishments, when he was introduced to Sandford, and put forth his hand to take his, Sandford, with evident reluctance, gave it to him; and when Lord Elmwood asked him, in the young man’s presence, “If he did not think his nephew greatly improved?” he looked at him from head to foot, and muttered, “He could not say he observed it.” The colour heightened in Mr. Rushbrook’s face upon the occasion; but he was too well bred not to be in perfect good humour.

Sandford saw this young man treated, in the house of Lord Elmwood, with the same respect and attention as if he had been his son; and it was but probable that the old priest would make a comparison between the situation of him and of Lady Matilda Elmwood. Before her, it was Sandford’s meaning to have concealed his thoughts upon the subject, and never to have mentioned it but with composure. That was, however, impossible: unused to hide his feelings, at the name of Rushbrook his countenance would always change; and a sarcastic sneer, sometimes a frown of resentment, would force its way in spite of his resolution. Miss Woodley, too, with all her boundless charity and good-will, was upon this occasion, induced to limit their excess;

and they did not extend so far as to reach poor Rushbrook. She even, and in *reality*, did not think him handsome or engaging in his manners; she thought his gaiety frivolousness, his compli-
ance affectation, and his good-humour impertinence. It was impossible to conceal those unfavourable sentiments entirely from Matilda; for when the subject arose, as it frequently did, Miss Woodley's undisguised heart, and Sandford's undisguised countenance, told them instantly. Matilda had the understanding to imagine, that she was, perhaps, the object who had thus deformed Mr. Rushbrook, and frequently (though he was a stranger to her, and one who had caused her many a jealous heartach), frequently she would speak in his vindication.

"You are very good," said Sandford, one day to her: "you like him, because you know your father loves him."

This was a hard sentence for the daughter of Lord Elmwood to hear, to whom her father's love would have been more precious than any other blessing; she, however, checked the assault of envy, and kindly replied,—

"My mother loved him too, Mr. Sandford."

"Yes," answered Sandford, "he has been a *grateful* man to your poor mother. She did not suppose when she took him into the house—when she entreated your father to take him—and through her caresses and officious praises of him first gave him that power which he now possesses over his uncle; she little foresaw, at that time, his ingratitude, and its effects."

"Very true," said Miss Woodley, with a heavy sigh.

"What ingratitude?" asked Matilda. "Do you suppose Mr. Rushbrook is the cause that my father will not see me? Oh, do not pay Lord Elmwood's motive so ill a compliment."

"I do not say that he is the absolute cause," returned Sandford; "but if a parent's heart is void, I would have it remain so, till its lawful owner is replaced. Usurpers I detest."

"No one can take Lord Elmwood's heart by force," replied his daughter: "it must, I believe, be a free gift to the possessor; and, as such, whoever has it has a right to it."

In this manner she would plead the young man's excuse; perhaps but to hear what could be said in his disfavour, for secretly his name was bitter to her: and once she exclaimed in vexation, on Sandford's saying Lord Elmwood and Mr. Rushbrook were gone out shooting together,—

"All that pleasure is eclipsed which I used to take in listening to the report of my father's gun; for I cannot now distinguish his from his parasite's."

Sandford (much as he disliked Rushbrook), for this expression, which comprised her father in the reflection, turned to Matilda in extreme anger: but as he saw the colour rise into her face, for what, in the strong feelings of her heart, had escaped her lips, he did not say a word; and by her tears that followed, he rejoiced to see how much she reproved *herself*.

Miss Woodley, vexed to the heart, and provoked every time she saw Lord Elmwood and Rushbrook together, and saw the familiar terms on which this young man lived with his benefactor, now made her visits to him very seldom. If Lord Elmwood observed this, he did not appear to observe it; and though he received her politely when she did pay him a visit, it was always very coldly: nor did she suppose if she never went he would ever ask for her. For his daughter's sake, however, she thought it right sometimes to show herself before him; for she knew it must be impossible that, with all his apparent indifference, he could ever see *her* without thinking for a moment on his child; and what one fortunate thought might some time bring about was an object much too serious for her to overlook. She, therefore, after remaining confined to her own suite of rooms near three weeks (excepting those anxious walks she and Matilda stole, while Lord Elmwood dined, or before he rose in a morning), went one forenoon into his apartments, where, as usual, she found him with Mr. Sandford and Mr. Rushbrook. After she had sat about half an hour, conversing with them all, though but very little with the latter, Lord Elmwood was called out of the room upon some business; presently after, Sandford; and now, by no means pleased with the companion with whom she was left, she rose, and was also retiring, when Rushbrook fixed his speaking eyes upon her, and cried,—

"Miss Woodley, will you pardon me what I am going to say?"

"Certainly, sir; you can, I am sure, say nothing but what I must forgive." But she made this reply with a distance and a reserve very unlike the usual manners of Miss Woodley.

He looked at her earnestly, and cried, "Ah, Miss Woodley, you don't behave so kindly to me as you used to do."

"I do not understand you, sir," she replied, very gravely. "Times are changed, Mr. Rushbrook, since you were last here: you were then but a child."

"Yet I love all those persons now, that I loved then," replied he; "and so I shall for ever."

"But you mistake, Mr. Rushbrook; I was not, even then, so very much the object of your affections; there were other ladies you loved better. Perhaps you don't remember Lady Elmwood."

"Don't I?" cried he. "Oh!" (clasping his hands and lifting up his eyes to Heaven) "shall I ever forget her?"

That moment Lord Elmwood opened the door; the conversation, of course, that moment ended; but confusion, at the sudden surprise, was on the face of both parties: he saw it, and looked at each of them by turns with a sternness that made poor Miss Woodley ready to faint; while Rushbrook, with the most natural and happy laugh that ever was affected, cried, "No, don't tell my Lord, pray, Miss Woodley." She was more confused than before, and Lord Elmwood turning to him, asked what the subject was. By this time he had invented one; and, continuing his laugh, said, "Miss Woodley, my Lord, will to this day protest that she saw my apparition when I was a boy; and she says it is a sign I shall die young, and is really much affected at it."

Lord Elmwood turned away before this ridiculous speech was concluded; yet so well had it been acted, that he did not for an instant doubt its truth.

Miss Woodley felt herself greatly relieved; and yet so little is it in the power of those we dislike to do any thing to please us, that from this very circumstance she formed a more unfavourable opinion of Mr. Rushbrook than she had done before. She saw in this little incident the art of dissimulation, cunning, and duplicity in its most glaring shape; and detested the method by which they had each escaped Lord Elmwood's suspicion, and perhaps anger, the more, because it was so dexterously managed.

Lady Matilda and Sandford were both in their turns informed of this trait in Mr. Rushbrook's character; and although Miss Woodley had the best of dispositions, and upon every occasion spoke the strictest truth, yet, in relating this occurrence,

she did not speak *all* the truth; for every circumstance that would have told to the young man's advantage *literally* had slipped her memory.

The twenty-ninth of October arrived, on which a dinner, a ball, and supper, was given by Lord Elmwood to all the neighbouring gentry: the peasants also dined in the park off a roasted bullock; several casks of ale were distributed, and the bells of the village rung. Matilda, who heard and saw some part of this festivity from her windows, enquired the cause; but even the servant who waited upon her had too much sensibility to tell her, and answered, "He did not know." Miss Woodley, however, soon learned the reason, and, groaning with the painful secret, informed her, "Mr. Rushbrook on that day was come of age."

"*My* birthday was last week," replied Matilda; but not a word beside.

In their retired apartments, this day passed away not only soberly, but almost silently; for to speak upon any subject that did not engage their thoughts had been difficult, and to speak upon the only one that did had been afflicting.

Just as they were sitting down to dinner, their bell gently rung, and in walked Sandford.

"Why are you not among the revellers, Mr. Sandford?" cried Miss Woodley, with an ironical sneer (the first her features ever wore). "Pray, were not you invited to dine with the company?"

"Yes," replied Sandford; "but my head ached; and so I had rather come and take a bit with you."

Matilda, as if she had seen his heart as he spoke, clung round his neck and sobbed on his bosom: he put her peevishly away, crying, "Nonsense, nonsense; eat your dinner." But he did not eat himself.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ABOUT a week after this, Lord Elmwood went out two days for a visit; consequently Rushbrook was for that time master of the house. The first morning he went a-shooting, and returning about noon, enquired of Sandford, who was sitting in the breakfast-room, if he had taken up a volume of plays left upon the table. "I read no such things," replied Sandford, and quitted the room abruptly. Rushbrook then rang for his servant, and desired him to look for the book, asking him angrily, "Who had been in the apartment? for he was sure he had left it there when he went out." The servant withdrew to enquire, and presently returned with the volume in his hand, and "Miss Woodley's compliments; she begs your pardon, sir: she did not know the book was yours, and hopes you will excuse the liberty she took."

"Miss Woodley!" cried Rushbrook, with surprise; "she comes so seldom into these apartments, I did not suppose it was her who had it. Take it back to her instantly, with my respects, and I beg she will keep it."

The man went, but returned with the book again, and, laying it on the table without speaking, was going away; when Rushbrook, hurt at receiving no second message, said, "I am afraid, sir, you did very wrong when you first took this book from Miss Woodley."

"It was not from her I took it, sir," replied the man: "it was from Lady Matilda."

Since he had entered the house, Rushbrook had never before heard the name of Lady Matilda. He was shocked, confounded more than ever; and, to conceal what he felt, instantly ordered the man out of the room.

In the mean time, Miss Woodley and Matilda were talking over this trifling occurrence; and, frivolous as it was, drew from it strong conclusions of Rushbrook's insolence and power.

In spite of her pride, the daughter of Lord Elmwood even wept at the insult she had received on this insignificant occasion ; for, the volume being merely taken from her at Mr. Rushbrook's command, she felt an insult ; and the manner in which it was done by the servant might contribute to the offence.

While Miss Woodley and she were upon this conversation, a note came from Rushbrook to Miss Woodley, wherein he entreated he might be permitted to see her. She sent a verbal answer, "She was engaged." He sent again, begging she would name her own time. But, sure of a second denial, he followed the servant who took the last message ; and as Miss Woodley came out of her apartment into the gallery to speak to him, Rushbrook presented himself, and told the man to retire.

"Mr. Rushbrook," said Miss Woodley, "this intrusion is unmannerly ; and destitute as you may think me of the friendship of Lord Elmwood——"

In the ardour with which Rushbrook was waiting to express himself, he interrupted her, and caught hold of her hand.

She immediately snatched it from him, and withdrew into her chamber.

He followed, saying, in a low voice, "Dear Miss Woodley, hear me."

At that juncture Lady Matilda, who was in an inner apartment, came out of it into Miss Woodley's. Perceiving a gentleman, she stopped short at the door.

Rushbrook cast his eyes upon her, and stood motionless : his lips only moved. "Do not depart, madam," said he, "without hearing my apology for being here."

Though Matilda had never seen him since her infancy, there was no occasion to tell her who it was that addressed her : his elegant and youthful person, joined to the incident which had just occurred, convinced her it was Rushbrook. She looked at him with an air of surprise, but with still more of dignity.

"Miss Woodley is severe upon me, madam," continued he : "she judges me unkindly ; and I am afraid she will prepossess you with the same unfavourable sentiments."

Still Matilda did not speak, but looked at him with the same air of dignity.

"If, Lady Matilda," resumed he, "I have offended you, and

must quit you without pardon, I am more unhappy than I should be with the loss of your father's protection; more forlorn than, when an orphan boy, your mother first took pity on me."

At this last sentence, Matilda turned her eyes on Miss Woodley, and seemed in doubt what reply she was to give.

Rushbrook immediately fell upon his knees. "Oh, Lady Matilda," cried he, "if you knew the sensations of my heart, you would not treat me with this disdain."

"We can only judge of those sensations, Mr. Rushbrook," said Miss Woodley, "by the effect they have upon your conduct; and while you insult Lord and Lady Elmwood's daughter by an intrusion like this, and then ridicule her abject state by mockeries like these——"

He rose from his knees instantly, and interrupted her, crying, "What can I do? What can I say, to make you change your opinion of me? While Lord Elmwood has been at home, I have kept an awful distance; and though every moment I breathed was a wish to cast myself at his daughter's feet, yet as I feared, Miss Woodley, that you were incensed against me, by what means was I to procure an interview but by stratagem or force? This accident has given a third method, and I had not strength, I had not courage, to let it pass. Lord Elmwood will soon return, and we may both of us be hurried to town immediately. Then how, for a tedious winter, could I endure the reflection that I was despised, nay, perhaps, considered as an object of ingratitude, by the only child of my deceased benefactress?"

Matilda replied with all her father's haughtiness, "Depend upon it, sir, if you should ever enter my thoughts, it will only be as an object of envy."

"Suffer me, then, madam," said he, "as an earnest that you do not think worse of me than I merit—suffer me to be sometimes admitted into your presence."

She would scarce permit him to finish the period, before she replied, "This is the last time, sir, we shall ever meet, depend upon it; unless, indeed, Lord Elmwood should delegate to you the control of my actions—*his* commands I never dispute." And here she burst into tears.

Rushbrook walked towards the window, and did not speak for some time; then turning himself to make a reply, both Ma-

tilda and Miss Woodley were somewhat surprised to see that he had shed tears himself. Having conquered them, he said, "I will not offend you, madam, by remaining one moment longer; and I give you my honour, that, upon no pretence whatever, will I presume to intrude here again. Professions, I find, have no weight; and only by this obedience to your orders can I give a proof of that respect which you inspire; and let the agitation I now feel convince you, Lady Matilda, that, with all my seeming good fortune, I am not happier than yourself."—And so much was he agitated while he delivered this address, that it was with difficulty he came to the conclusion. When he did, he bowed with reverence, as if leaving the presence of a deity, and retired.

Matilda immediately entered the chamber she had left, without casting a single look at Miss Woodley by which she might guess of the opinion she had formed of Mr. Rushbrook's conduct. The next time they met they did not even mention his name; for they were ashamed to own a partiality in his favour, and were too just to bring any accusation against him.

But Miss Woodley, the day following, communicated the intelligence of this visit to Mr. Sandford, who, not having been present and a witness of those marks of humility and respect which were conspicuous in the deportment of Mr. Rushbrook, was highly offended at his presumption; and threatened, if he ever dared to force his company there again, he would acquaint Lord Elmwood with his arrogance, whatever might be the event. Miss Woodley, however, assured him, she believed he would have no cause for such a complaint, as the young man had made the most solemn promise never to commit the like offence; and she thought it her duty to enjoin Sandford, till he did repeat it, not to mention the circumstance even to Rushbrook himself.

Matilda could not but feel a regard for her father's heir, in return for that which he had so fervently declared for her: yet the more favourable her opinion of his mind and manners, the more he became an object of her jealousy for the affections of Lord Elmwood; and he was now, consequently, an object of greater sorrow to her than when she believed him less worthy. These sentiments were reserved on his part towards her: no jealousy intervened to bar his admiration and esteem: the

beauty of her person, and grandeur of her mien, not only confirmed, but improved, the exalted idea he had formed of her previous to their meeting, and which his affection to both her parents had inspired. The next time he saw his benefactor, he began to feel a new esteem and regard for him, for his daughter's sake; as he had at first an esteem for her, on the foundation of his love for Lord and Lady Elmwood. He gazed with wonder at his uncle's insensibility to his own happiness, and would gladly have led him to the jewel he cast away, though even his own expulsion should have been the fatal consequence. Such was the youthful, warm, generous, grateful, but unreflecting mind of Rushbrook.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AFTER this incident, Miss Woodley left her apartments less frequently than before. She was afraid, though till now mistrust had been a stranger to her heart—she was afraid that duplicity might be concealed under the apparent friendship of Rushbrook. It did not, indeed, appear so from any part of his late behaviour, but she was apprehensive for the fate of Matilda: she disliked him too, and therefore she suspected him. Near three weeks she had not now paid a visit to Lord Elmwood; and though to herself every visit was a pain, yet as Matilda took a delight in hearing of her father, what he said, what he did, what his attention seemed most employed on, and a thousand other circumstantial informations, in which Sandford would scorn to be half so particular, it was a deprivation to her, that Miss Woodley did not go oftener. Now, too, the middle of November was come, and it was expected her father would soon quit his country seat.

Partly, therefore, to indulge her hapless companion, and partly because it was a duty, Miss Woodley once again paid Lord Elmwood a morning visit, and staid dinner. Rushbrook was officiously polite (for that was the epithet she gave his attention in relating it to Lady Matilda); yet she owned he had

not that forward impertinence she had formerly discovered in him, but appeared much more grave and sedate.

"But tell me of my father," said Matilda.

"I was going, my dear; but don't be concerned—don't let it vex you."

"What? what?" cried Matilda, frightened by the preface.

"Why, on my observing that I thought Mr. Rushbrook looked paler than usual, and appeared not to be in perfect health (which was really the case), your father expressed the greatest anxiety imaginable: he said he could not bear to see him look so ill, begged him, with all the tenderness of a parent, to take the advice of a physician, and added a thousand other affectionate things."

"I detest Mr. Rushbrook," said Matilda, with her eyes flashing indignation.

"Nay, for shame!" returned Miss Woodley: "do you suppose I told you this to make you hate him?"

"No, there was no occasion for that," replied Matilda: "my sentiments (though I have never before avowed them) were long ago formed: he was always an object which added to my unhappiness; but since his daring intrusion into my apartments, he has been the object of my hatred."

"But now, perhaps, I may tell you something to please you," cried Miss Woodley.

"And what is that?" said Matilda, with indifference; for the first intelligence had hurt her spirits too much to suffer her to listen with pleasure to any thing.

"Mr. Rushbrook," continued Miss Woodley, "replied to your father, that his indisposition was but a slight nervous fever, and he would defer a physician's advice till he went to London; on which Lord Elmwood said, 'And when do you expect to be there?'—he replied, 'Within a week or two, I suppose, my Lord.' But your father answered, 'I do not mean to go myself till after Christmas.'—'No, indeed, my Lord!' said Mr. Sandford, with surprise: 'you have not passed your Christmas here these many years,'—'No,' returned your father; 'but I think I feel myself more attached to this house at present than ever I did in my life.'"

"You imagine, then, my father thought of me, when he said this?" cried Matilda, eagerly.

"But I may be mistaken," replied Miss Woodley, "I leave you to judge. Though I am sure Mr. Sandford imagined he thought of you, for I saw a smile over his whole face immediately."

"Did you, Miss Woodley?"

"Yes: it appeared on every feature except his lips; those he kept fast closed, for fear Lord Elmwood should perceive it."

Miss Woodley, with all her minute intelligence, did not, however, acquaint Matilda, that Rushbrook followed her to the window when the Earl was out of the room, and Sandford half asleep at the other end of it, and enquired respectfully but anxiously for *her*; adding, "It is my concern for Lady Matilda which makes me thus indisposed: I suffer more than she does; but I am not permitted to tell her so: nor can I hope, Miss Woodley, that you will." She replied, "You are right, sir." Nor did she reveal this conversation; while not a sentence that passed except that was omitted.

When Christmas arrived, Lord Elmwood had many convivial days at Elmwood House; but Matilda was never mentioned by one of his guests, and most probably was never thought of. During all those holidays, she was unusually melancholy, but sunk into the deepest dejection when she was told the day was fixed, on which her father was to return to town. On the morning of that day she wept incessantly; and all her consolation was, "She would go to the chamber window that was fronting the door through which he was to pass to his carriage, and for the first time, and most probably for the last time, in her life behold him."

This design was soon forgot in another:—"she would rush boldly into the apartment where he was, and at his feet take leave of him for ever: she would lay hold of his hands, clasp his knees, provoke him to spurn her, which would be joy in comparison to this cruel indifference." In the bitterness of her grief, she once called upon her mother, and reproached her memory; but the moment she recollected this offence (which was almost instantaneously), she became all mildness and resignation. "What have I said?" cried she. "Dear, dear honoured saint, forgive me; and for your sake I will bear all I have to bear with patience: I will not groan: I will not even sigh again: this task I set myself, to atone for what I have dared to utter."

While Lady Matilda laboured under this variety of sensations, Miss Woodley was occupied in bewailing, and endeavouring to calm her sorrows; and Lord Elmwood, with Rushbrook, was ready to set off. The Earl, however, loitered, and did not once seem in haste to be gone. When at last he got up to depart, Sandford thought he pressed his hand, and shook it with more warmth than ever he had done in his life. Encouraged by this supposition, Sandford said, "My Lord, won't you condescend to take your leave of Miss Woodley?"—"Certainly, Sandford," replied he, and seemed glad of an excuse to sit down again.

Impressed with the pitiable state in which she had left his only child, Miss Woodley, when she came before Lord Elmwood to bid him farewell, was pale, trembling, and in tears. Sandford, notwithstanding his patron's apparently kind humour, was alarmed at the construction he must put upon her appearance, and cried, "What, Miss Woodley, are you not recovered of your illness yet?" Lord Elmwood, however, took no notice of her looks: but, after wishing her her health, walked slowly out of the house; turning back frequently and speaking to Sandford, or to some other person who was behind him, as if part of his thoughts were left behind, and he went with reluctance.

When he had quitted the room where Miss Woodley was, Rushbrook, timid before her, as she had been before her benefactor, went up to her, all humility, and said, "Miss Woodley, we ought to be friends: our concern, our devotion is paid to the same objects, and one common interest should teach us to be friendly."

She made no reply. "Will you permit me to write to you when I am away?" said he. "You may wish to hear of Lord Elmwood's health, and of what changes may take place in his resolutions. Will you permit me?"—At that moment a servant came and said, "Sir, my Lord is in the carriage, and waiting for you." He hastened away, and Miss Woodley was relieved from the pain of giving him a denial.

No sooner was the travelling carriage, with all its attendants, out of sight, than Lady Matilda was conducted by Miss Woodley from her lonely retreat, into that part of the house from whence her father had just departed; and she visited every spot where he had so long resided, with a pleasing curiosity, that for a while diverted her grief. In the breakfast and dining

rooms, she leaned over those seats, with a kind of filial piety, on which she was told he had been accustomed to sit. And, in the library, she took up, with filial delight, the pen with which he had been writing; and looked with the most curious attention into those books that were laid upon his reading-desk. But a hat, lying on one of the tables, gave her a sensation beyond any other she experienced on this occasion: in that trifling article of his dress, she thought she saw himself, and held it in her hand with pious reverence.

In the mean time, Lord Elmwood and Rushbrook were proceeding on the road, with hearts not less heavy than those which they had left at Elmwood House; though neither of them could so well define the cause of this oppression, as Matilda could account for the weight which oppressed hers.

CHAPTER XL.

YOUNG as Lady Matilda was during the life of her mother, neither her youth, nor the recluse state in which she lived, had precluded her from the notice and solicitations of a nobleman who had professed himself her lover. Viscount Margrave had an estate not far distant from the retreat Lady Elmwood had chosen; and being devoted to the sports of the country, he seldom quitted it for any of those joys which the town afforded. He was a young man, of a handsome person, and was, what his neighbours called, "a man of spirit." He was an excellent fox-hunter, and as excellent a companion over his bottle at the end of the chase: he was prodigal of his fortune, where his pleasures were concerned, and as those pleasures were chiefly social, his sporting companions and his mistresses (for these were also of the plural number) partook largely of his wealth.

Two months previous to Lady Elmwood's death, Miss Woodley and Lady Matilda were taking their usual walk in some fields and lanes near to their house, when chance threw Lord Margrave in their way during a thunder-storm, in which they

were suddenly caught; and he had the satisfaction to convey his new acquaintances to their home in his coach, safe from the fury of the elements. Grateful for the service he had rendered them, Miss Woodley and her charge permitted him to enquire occasionally after their health, and would sometimes see him. The story of Lady Elmwood was known to Lord Margrave; and as he beheld her daughter with a passion such as he had been unused to overcome, he indulged it with the probable hope, that on the death of the mother, Lord Elmwood would receive his child, and, perhaps, accept him as his son-in-law. Wedlock was not the plan which Lord Margrave had ever proposed to himself for happiness; but the excess of his love, on this new occasion, subdued all the resolutions he had formed against the married state; and not daring to hope for the consummation of his wishes by any other means, he suffered himself to look forward to marriage as his only resource. No sooner was the long-expected death of Lady Elmwood arrived than he waited with impatience to hear that Lady Matilda was sent for and acknowledged by her father; for he meant to be the first to lay before Lord Elmwood his pretensions as a suitor. But those pretensions were founded on the vague hopes of a lover only; and Miss Woodley, to whom he first declared them, said every thing possible to convince him of their fallacy. As to the object of his passion, she was not only insensible but wholly inattentive to all that was said to her on the subject: Lady Elmwood died without ever being disturbed with it; for her daughter did not even remember his proposals so as to repeat them again, and Miss Woodley thought it prudent to conceal from her friend every new incident which might give her cause for new anxieties.

When Sandford and the ladies left the North, and came to Elmwood House, so much were their thoughts employed with other affairs, that Lord Margrave did not occupy a place; and during the whole time they had been at their new abode, they had never once heard of him. He had, nevertheless, his whole mind fixed upon Lady Matilda, and had placed spies in the neighbourhood to inform him of every circumstance relating to her situation. Having imbibed an aversion to matrimony, he heard with but little regret that there was no prospect of her ever becoming her father's heir, while such an information gave

him the hope of obtaining her upon the terms of a mercenary companion.

Lord Elmwood's departure to town forwarded this hope; and, flattering himself that the humiliating state in which Matilda must feel herself in the house of her father might gladly induce her to seek shelter under any other protection, he boldly advanced, as soon as the Earl was gone, to make such overture as his wishes and his vanity told him could not be rejected.

Enquiring for Miss Woodley, he easily gained admittance; but at the sight of so much modesty and dignity in the person of Matilda, the appearance of so much goodwill, and yet such circumspection in her female friend, and charmed at the good sense and proper spirit which were always apparent in Sandford, he fell once more into the dread of never becoming to Lady Matilda any thing of more importance to his reputation than a husband.

Even that humble hope was sometimes denied him, while Sandford set forth the impropriety of troubling Lord Elmwood on such a subject at present; and while the Viscount's penetration, small as it was, discovered in his fair one more to discourage than to favour his wishes. Plunged, however, too deep in his passion to emerge from it in haste, he meant still to visit, and to wait for a change to happier circumstances, when he was peremptorily desired by Mr. Sandford to desist from ever coming again.

"And why, Mr. Sandford?" cried he.

"For two reasons, my Lord. In the first place, your visits might be displeasing to Lord Elmwood: in the next place, I know they are so to his daughter."

Unaccustomed to be addressed so plainly, particularly in a case where his heart was interested, he nevertheless submitted with patience; but, in his own mind, determined how long this patience should continue—no longer than it served as the means to prove his obedience, and by that artifice to secure his better reception at some future period.

On his return home, cheered with the huzzas of his jovial companions, he began to consult those friends what scheme was best to be adopted for the accomplishment of his desires. Some boldly advised application to the father, in defiance to the old priest; but that was the very last method his Lordship himself

approved, as marriage must inevitably have followed. Lord Elmwood's consent : besides, though a peer, Lord Margrave was unused to rank with peers ; and even the formality of an interview with one of his equals carried along with it a terror, or at least a fatigue, to a rustic lord. Others of his companions advised seduction ; but happily the Viscount possessed no arts of this kind to affect a heart joined with such an understanding as Matilda's. There were not wanting among his most favourite counsellors some who painted the superior triumph and gratification of force. Those assured him there was nothing to apprehend under this head ; as, from the behaviour of Lord Elmwood to his child, it was more than probable he would be utterly indifferent as to any violence that might be offered her. This last advice seemed inspired by the aid of wine ; and no sooner had the wine freely circulated, than this was always the expedient which appeared by far the best.

While Lord Margrave alternately cherished his hopes and his fears in the country, Rushbrook in town gave way to his fears only. Every day of his life made him more acquainted with the firm, unshaken temper of Lord Elmwood, and every day whispered more forcibly to him, that pity, gratitude, and friendship, strong and affectionate as these passions are, were weak and cold to that which had gained the possession of his heart : he doubted, but he did not long doubt, that which he felt was love. "And yet," said he to himself, "it is love of such a kind as, arising from causes independent of the object itself, can scarcely deserve that sacred name. Did I not love Lady Matilda before I beheld her ? For her mother's sake I loved her, and even for her father's. Should I have felt the same affection for her had she been the child of other parents ?—No. Or should I have felt that sympathetic tenderness which now preys upon my health, had not her misfortunes excited it ?—No." Yet the love which is the result of gratitude and pity only he thought had little claim to rank with his ; and, after the most deliberate and deep reflection, he concluded with this decisive opinion—He should have loved Lady Matilda in *whatever state*, in *whatever circumstances* ; and that the tenderness he felt towards her, and the anxiety for her happiness before he knew her, extreme as they were, were yet cool and dispassionate sensations, compared to those which her person and demeanour had incited ;

and though he acknowledged, that by the preceding sentiments his heart was softened, prepared, and moulded, as it were, to receive this last impression, yet the violence of his passion told him that genuine love, if not the basis on which it was founded, had been the certain consequence. With a strict scrutiny into his heart he sought this knowledge, but arrived at it with a regret that amounted to despair.

To shield him from despondency, he formed in his mind a thousand visions, displaying the joys of his union with Lady Matilda; but her father's implacability confounded them all. Lord Elmwood was a man who made few resolutions, but those were the effect of deliberation; and as he was not the least capricious or inconstant in his temper, they were resolutions which no probable event could shake. Love, which produces wonders, which seduces and subdues the most determined and rigid spirits, had in two instances overcome the inflexibility of Lord Elmwood: he married Lady Elmwood contrary to his determination, because he loved; and for the sake of ~~the~~ beloved object he had, contrary to his resolution, taken under his immediate care young Rushbrook; but the magic which once enchanted away this spirit of immutability was no more—Lady Elmwood was no more, and the charm was broken.

As Miss Woodley was deprived of the opportunity of desiring Rushbrook not to write, when he asked her the permission, he passed one whole morning in the gratification of forming and writing a letter to her, which he thought might possibly be shown to Matilda. As he dared not touch upon any of those circumstances in which he was the most interested, this, joined to the respect he wished to pay the lady to whom he wrote, limited his letter to about twenty lines; yet the studious manner with which these were dictated, the hope that they might, and the fear that they might not, be seen and regarded by Lady Matilda, rendered the task an anxiety so pleasing, that he could have wished it might have lasted for a year; and in this tendency to magnify trifles was discoverable the never-failing symptom of ardent love.

A reply to this formal address was a reward he wished for with impatience, but he wished in vain; and in the midst of his chagrin at the disappointment, a sorrow, little thought of, occurred, and gave him a perturbation of mind he had never

before experienced. Lord Elmwood proposed a wife to him, and in a way so assured of his acquiescence, that if Rushbrook's life had depended upon his daring to dispute his benefactor's will, he would not have had the courage to have done so. There was, however, in his reply and his embarrassment something which his uncle distinguished from a free concurrence; and, looking steadfastly at him, he said, in that stern manner which he now almost invariably assumed,—

“ You have no engagements, I suppose; have made no previous promises?”

“ None on earth, my Lord,” replied Rushbrook, candidly.

“ Nor have you disposed of your heart?”

“ No, my Lord,” replied he; but not candidly, nor with any appearance of candour: for though he spoke hastily, it was rather like a man frightened than assured. He hurried to tell the falsehood he thought himself obliged to tell, that the pain and shame might be over; but there he was deceived; the lie once told was more troublesome than in the conception, and added another confusion to the first.

Lord Elmwood now fixed his eyes upon him with a sullen scorn, and, rising from his chair, said, “ Rushbrook, if you have been so inconsiderate as to give away your heart, tell me so at once, and tell me the object.”

Rushbrook shuddered at the thought.

“ I here,” continued the Earl, “ tolerate the first untruth you ever told me, as the false assertion of a lover; and give you an opportunity of recalling it: but after this moment it is a lie between man and man—a lie to your friend and father, and I will not forgive it.”

Rushbrook stood silent, confused, alarmed, and bewildered in his thoughts. Lord Elmwood proceeded,—

“ Name the person, if there is any, on whom you have bestowed your heart; and though I do not give you the hope that I shall not censure your folly, I will at least not reproach you for having at first denied it.”

To repeat these words in writing, the reader must condemn the young man that he could hesitate to own he loved, if he was even afraid to name the object of his passion; but his interrogator had made the two answers inseparable, so that all evasions of the second, Rushbrook knew, would be fruitless, after having

avowed the first; and how could he confess the latter? The absolute orders he received from the steward on his first return from his travels, were, "never to mention his daughter, any more than his late wife, before Lord Elmwood." The fault of having rudely intruded into Lady Matilda's presence rushed also upon his mind; for he did not even dare to say by what means he had beheld her. But, more than all, the threatening manner in which this rational and apparently conciliating speech was uttered, the menaces, the severity which sat upon the Earl's countenance while he delivered those moderate words, might have intimidated a man wholly independent, and less used to fear him than his nephew had been.

"You make no answer, sir," said Lord Elmwood, after waiting a few moments for his reply.

"I have only to say, my Lord," returned Rushbrook, "that although my heart may be totally disengaged, I may yet be disinclined to marriage."

"May! may! Your heart *may* be disengaged!" repeated he. "Do you dare to reply to me equivocally, when I have asked a positive answer?"

"Perhaps I am not positive myself, my Lord; but I will enquire into the state of my mind, and make you acquainted with it very soon."

As the angry demeanour of his uncle affected Rushbrook with fear, so that fear, powerfully (but with proper manliness) expressed, again softened the displeasure of Lord Elmwood; and, seeing and pitying his nephew's sensibility, he now changed his austere voice, and said mildly, but firmly,—

"I give you a week to consult with yourself: at the expiration of that time I shall talk with you again; and I command you to be then prepared to speak, not only without deceit, but without hesitation." He left the room at these words, and left Rushbrook released from a fate which his apprehensions had beheld impending that moment.

He had now a week to call his thoughts together, to weigh every circumstance, and to determine whether implicitly to submit to Lord Elmwood's recommendation of a wife, or to revolt from it, and see another, with more subserviency to his will, appointed his heir.

Undetermined how to act upon this trial, which was to decide

his future destiny, Rushbrook suffered so poignant an uncertainty that he became at length ill; and before the end of the week that was allotted him for his reply, he was confined to his bed in a high fever. Lord Elmwood was extremely affected at his indisposition: he gave him every care he could bestow, and even much of his personal attendance. This last favour had a claim upon the young man's gratitude superior to every other obligation which since his infancy his benefactor had conferred; and he was at times so moved by those marks of kindness he received, that he would form the intention of tearing from his heart every trace that Lady Matilda had left there, and, as soon as his health would permit him, obey to the utmost of his views every wish his uncle had conceived. Yet, again, her pitiable situation presented itself to his compassion, and her beauteous person to his love. Divided between the claims of obligation to the father, and tender attachment to the daughter, his illness was increased by the tortures of his mind, and he once sincerely wished for that death of which he was in danger, to free him from the dilemma in which his affections had involved him.

At the time his disorder was at the height, and he lay complaining of the violence of his fever, Lord Elmwood, taking his hand, asked him "if there was any thing he could do for him?"

"Yes, yes, my Lord, a great deal," he replied eagerly.

"What is it, Harry?"

"Oh, my Lord," replied he, "that is what I must not tell you."

"Defer it, then, till you are well," said Lord Elmwood, afraid of being surprised or affected by the state of his health into any promises which he might hereafter find the impropriety of granting.

"And when I recover, my Lord, you give me leave to reveal to you my wishes, let them be what they will?"

His uncle hesitated; but seeing an anxiety for the answer, by his raising himself upon his elbow in the bed, and staring wildly, Lord Elmwood at last said, "Certainly—yes, yes," as a child is answered for its quiet.

That Lord Elmwood could have no suspicion what the real petition was which Rushbrook meant to present him, is cer-

tain; but it is certain he expected he had some request to make with which it might be wrong for him to comply, and therefore he now avoided hearing what it was: for great as his compassion for him was in his present state, it was not of sufficient force to urge him to give a promise he did not mean to perform. Rushbrook, on his part, was pleased with the assurance he might speak when he was restored to health; but no sooner was his fever abated, and his senses perfectly recovered from the slight derangement his malady had occasioned, than the lively remembrance of what he had hinted alarmed him, and he was abashed to look his kind but awful relation in the face. Lord Elmwood's cheerfulness, however, on his returning health, and his undiminished attention, soon convinced him that he had nothing to fear. But, alas! he found, too, that he had nothing to hope. As his health re-established, his wishes re-established also, and with his wishes his despair.

Convinced by what had passed that his nephew had something upon his mind which he feared to reveal, the Earl no longer doubted but that some youthful attachment had armed him against any marriage he should propose; but he had so much pity for his present weak state, as to delay that further enquiry, which he had threatened before his illness, to a time when his health should be entirely restored.

It was the end of May before Rushbrook was able to partake in the usual routine of the day. The country was now prescribed him as the means of complete restoration; and, as Lord Elmwood designed to leave London some time in June, he advised him to go to Elmwood House a week or two before him. This advice was received with delight, and a letter was sent to Mr. Sandford to prepare for Mr. Rushbrook's arrival.

CHAPTER XLI.

DURING the illness of Rushbrook, news had been sent of his danger, from the servants in town to those at Elmwood House, and Lady Matilda expressed compassion when she was told of it. She began to conceive, the instant she thought he would soon die, that his visit to her had merit rather than impertinence in its design, and that he might possibly be a more deserving man than she had supposed him to be. Even Sandford and Miss Woodley began to recollect qualifications he possessed, which they never had reflected on before; and Miss Woodley, in particular, reproached herself that she had been so severe and inattentive to him. Notwithstanding the prospects his death pointed out to her, it was with infinite joy she heard he was recovered; nor was Sandford less satisfied; for he had treated the young man too unkindly not to dread lest any ill should befall him. But although he was glad to hear of his restored health, when he was informed he was coming down to Elmwood House for a few weeks in the style of its master, Sandford, with all his religious and humane principles, could not help conceiving, that "if the youth had been properly prepared to die, he had been as well out of the world as in it."

He was still less his friend when he saw him arrive with his usual florid complexion. Had he come pale and sickly, Sandford had been kind to him; but, in apparently good health and spirits, he could not form his lips to tell him he was "glad to see him."

On his arrival, Matilda, who for five months had been at large, secluded herself as she would have done upon the arrival of Lord Elmwood, but with far different sensations. Notwithstanding her restriction on the latter occasion, the residence of her father in that house had been a source of pleasure rather than of sorrow to her; but from the abode of Rushbrook she derived punishment alone.

When, from enquiries, Rushbrook found that on his approach Matilda had retired to her own confined apartments, the thought was torture to him: it was the hope of seeing and conversing with her, of being admitted at all times to her society as the mistress of the house, that had raised his spirits, and effected his perfect cure beyond any other cause; and he was hurt to the greatest degree at this respect, or rather contempt, shown to him by her retreat.

It was, nevertheless, a subject too delicate for him to touch upon in any one sense: an invitation for her company, on his part, might carry the appearance of superior authority, and an affected condescension, which he justly considered the worst of all insults. And yet, how could he support the reflection that his visit had placed the daughter of his benefactor as a dependent stranger in that house, where in reality *he* was the dependent, and she the lawful heiress. For two or three days he suffered the torment of these meditations, hoping that he should come to an explanation of all he felt by a fortunate meeting with Miss Woodley; but when that meeting occurred, though he observed she talked to him with less reserve than she had formerly done, and even gave some proofs of the native kindness of her disposition, yet she scrupulously avoided naming Lady Matilda; and when he diffidently enquired of her health, a cold restraint overspread Miss Woodley's face, and she left him instantly. To Sandford it was still more difficult for him to apply; for though frequently together, they were never sociable: and as Sandford seldom disguised his feelings, to Rushbrook he was always severe, and sometimes unmannerly.

In this perplexed situation, the country air was rather of detriment than service to the late invalid; and had he not, like a true lover, clung fast to fancied hope, while he could perceive no reality but despair, he would have returned to town, rather than by his stay have placed in a subordinate state the object of his adoration. Persisting in his hopes, he one morning met Miss Woodley in the garden, and, engaging her a longer time than usual in conversation, at last obtained her promise—"She would that day dine with him and Mr. Sandford." But no sooner had she parted from him, than she repented of her consent; and upon communicating it, Matilda, for the first time in her life, darted upon her kind companion a look of the most

cutting reproach and haughty resentment. Miss Woodley's own sentiments had upbraided her before; but she was not prepared to receive so pointed a mark of disapprobation from her young friend, till now duteous and humble to her as to a mother, and not less affectionate. Her heart was too susceptible to bear this disrespectful and contumelious frown, from the object of her long-devoted care and concern; the tears instantly covered her face, and she laid her hands upon her heart, as if she thought it would break. Matilda was moved; but she possessed too much of the manly indignation of her father to discover what she felt for the first few minutes. Miss Woodley, who had given so many tears to her sorrows, but never, till now, one to her anger, had a deeper sense of this indifference than of the anger itself, and, to conceal what she suffered, left the room. Matilda, who had been till this time working at her needle, seemingly composed, now let her work drop from her hand, and sat for a while in a deep reverie. At length she rose up, and followed Miss Woodley to the other apartment. She entered grave, majestic, and apparently serene, while her poor heart fluttered with a thousand distressing sensations. She approached Miss Woodley (who was still in tears) with silence; and, awed by her manners, the faithful friend of her deceased mother exclaimed, "Dear Lady Matilda, think no more on what I have done; do not resent it any longer, and I'll beg your pardon." Miss Woodley rose as she uttered these last words; but Matilda laid fast hold of her, to prevent the posture she offered to take, and instantly assumed it herself: "Oh, let this be my atonement!" she cried, with the most earnest supplication.

They interchanged forgiveness; and as this reconciliation was sincere, they each, without reserve, gave their opinion upon the subject that had caused the misunderstanding; and it was agreed an apology should be sent to Mr. Rushbrook,— "That Miss Woodley had been suddenly indisposed:" nor could this be said to differ from the truth, for since what had passed she was unfit to pay a visit.

Rushbrook, who had been all the morning elated with the advance he supposed he had made in that lady's favour, was highly disappointed, vexed, and angry, when this apology was delivered; nor did he, nor perhaps could he, conceal what he felt, although his unkind observer, Mr. Sandford, was present.

"I am a very unfortunate man!" said he, as soon as the servant was gone who brought the message.

Sandford cast his eyes upon him with a look of surprise and contempt.

"A very unfortunate man, indeed, Mr. Sandford," repeated he, "although you treat my complaint contemptuously."

Sandford made no reply, and seemed above making one.

They sat down to dinner. Rushbrook ate scarcely any thing, but drank frequently: Sandford took no notice of either, but had a book (which was his custom when he dined with persons whose conversation was not interesting to him) laid by the side of his plate, which he occasionally looked into, as the dishes were removing, or other opportunities served.

Rushbrook, just now more hopeless than ever of forming an acquaintance with Lady Matilda, began to give way to symptoms of impatience; and they made their first attack, by urging him to treat on the same level of familiarity that he himself was treated, Mr. Sandford, to whom he had, till now, ever behaved with the most profound tokens of respect.

"Come," said he to him, as soon as the dinner was removed, "lay aside your book, and be good company."

Sandford lifted up his eyes upon him—stared in his face—and cast them on the book again.

"Pshaw," continued Rushbrook, "I want a companion; and as Miss Woodley has disappointed me, I must have your company."

Sandford now laid his book down upon the table; but, still holding his fingers in the pages he was reading, said, "And why are you disappointed of Miss Woodley's company? When people expect what they have no right to hope, 'tis impertinent assurance to complain they are disappointed."

"I had a right to hope she would come," answered Rushbrook, "for she promised she would."

"But what right had you to ask her?"

"The right every one has to make his time pass as agreeably as he can."

"But not at the expense of another."

"I believe, Mr. Sandford, it would be a heavy expense to you to see me happy: I believe it would cost you even your own happiness."

"That is a price I have not now to give," replied Sandford, and began reading again. ▼

"What! you have already paid it away? No wonder that at your time of life it should be gone. But what do you think of my having already squandered mine?"

"I don't think about you," returned Sandford, without taking his eyes from the book.

"Can you look me in the face and say that, Mr. Sandford?—No, you cannot; for you know you *do* think of me, and you know you hate me." Here he drank two glasses of wine, one after another. "And I can tell you why you hate me," continued he: "it is from a cause for which I often hate myself."

Sandford read on.

"It is on Lady Matilda's account you hate me, and use me thus."

Sandford put down the book hastily, and put both his hands by his side.

"Yes," resumed Rushbrook, "you think I am wronging her."

"I think you insult her," exclaimed Sandford, "by this rude mention of her name; and I command you at your peril to desist."

"At my peril! Mr. Sandford? Do you assume the authority of my Lord Elmwood?"

"I do on this occasion; and if you dare to give your tongue a freedom——"

Rushbrook interrupted him—"Why then I boldly say (and as her friend you ought rather to applaud than resent it)—I boldly say, that my heart suffers so much for her situation that I am regardless of my own. I love her father—I loved her mother more—but I love *her* beyond either."

"Hold your licentious tongue," cried Sandford, "or quit the room."

"Licentious! Oh, the pure thoughts that dwell in her innocent mind are not less sensual than mine towards her. Do you upbraid me with my respect, my pity for her? They are the sensations which impel me to speak thus undisguised, even to you, my open—no, even worse—my secret enemy!"

"Insult *me* as you please, Mr. Rushbrook; but beware how you mention Lord Elmwood's daughter"

"Can it be to her dishonour that I pity her; that I would quit the house this moment never to return, so that she supplied the place which I withhold from her?"

"Go, then," cried Sandford.

"It would be of no use to her, or I would. But come, Mr. Sandford, I will dare do as much as you. Only second me, and I will entreat Lord Elmwood to be reconciled—to see and own her."

"Your vanity would be equal to your temerity—you entreat? She must greatly esteem those paternal favours which *your* entreaties gained her! Do you forget, young man, how short a time it is since you were *entreated for*?"

"I prove that I do not, while this anxiety for Lady Matilda arises from what I feel on that very account."

"Remove your anxiety, then, from her to yourself; for were I to let Lord Elmwood know what has now passed——"

"It is for your own sake, not for mine, if you do not."

"You shall not dare me to it, Mr. Rushbrook." And he rose from his seat. "You shall not dare me to do you an injury. But, to avoid the temptation, I will never again come into your company, unless my friend, Lord Elmwood, be present to protect me and his child from your insults."

Rushbrook rose in yet more warmth than Sandford. "Have you the injustice to say that I have insulted Lady Matilda?"

"To speak of her at all is, in you, an insult. But you have done more: you have dared to visit her: to force into her presence, and shock her with your offers of services which she scorns; and with your compassion, which she is above."

"Did she complain to you?"

"She or her friend did."

"I rather suppose, Mr. Sandford, that you have bribed some of the servants to reveal this circumstance."

"The suspicion becomes Lord Elmwood's heir."

"It becomes the man who lives in a house with you."

"I thank you, Mr. Rushbrook, for what has passed this day: it has taken a weight off my mind. I thought my disinclination to you might perhaps arise from prejudice: this conversation has relieved me from those fears, and I thank you." Saying this, he calmly walked out of the room, and left Rushbrook to reflect on what he had been doing.

Heated with the wine he had drank (and which Sandford, engaged on his book, had not observed), no sooner was he alone, than he became by degrees cool and repentant. "What had he done?" was the first question to himself. "He had offended Sandford." The man whom reason as well as prudence had ever taught him to respect, and even to revere. He had grossly offended the firm friend of Lady Matilda, by the unreserved and wanton use of her name. All the retorts he had uttered came now to his memory; with a total forgetfulness of all that Sandford had said to provoke them.

He once thought to follow him and beg his pardon; but the contempt with which he had been treated, more than all the anger, withheld him.

As he sat forming plans how to retrieve the opinion, ill as it was, which Sandford formerly entertained of him, he received a letter from Lord Elmwood, kindly enquiring after his health, and saying that he should be down early in the following week. Never were the friendly expressions of his uncle half so welcome to him; for they served to soothe his imagination, racked with Sandford's wrath and his own displeasure.

CHAPTER XLII.

WHEN Sandford acted deliberately, he always acted up to his duty: it was his duty to forgive Rushbrook, and he did so; but he had declared he would never "be again in his company unless Lord Elmwood was present;" and with all his forgiveness he found an unforgiving gratification in the duty of being obliged to keep his word.

The next day Rushbrook dined alone, while Sandford gave his company to the ladies. Rushbrook was too proud to seek to conciliate Sandford by abject concessions; but he endeavoured to meet him as by accident, and meant to try what, in such a case, a submissive apology might effect. For two days all the schemes he formed on that head proved fruitless: he could never

procure even a sight of him. But on the evening of the third day, taking a lonely walk, he turned the corner of a grove, and saw, in the very path he was going, Sandford accompanied by Miss Woodley; and, what agitated him infinitely more, Lady Matilda was with them. He knew not whether to proceed, or to quit the path and palpably shun them. To one who seemed to put an unkind construction upon all he said and did, he knew that to do either would be to do wrong. In spite of the propensity he felt to pass so near to Matilda, could he have known what conduct would have been deemed the most respectful, to *that* he would have submitted, whatever painful denial it had cost him. But undetermined whether to go forward, or to cross to another path, he still walked on till he came too nigh to recede: he then, with a diffidence not affected, but most powerfully felt, pulled off his hat; and, without bowing, stood respectfully silent while the company passed. Sandford walked on some paces before, and took no farther notice as he went by him, than just touching the fore part of his hat with his finger. Miss Woodley courtesied as she followed; but Lady Matilda made a full stop, and said, in the gentlest accents, "I hope, Mr. Rushbrook, you are perfectly recovered."

It was the sweetest music he had ever listened to; and he replied, with the most reverential bow, "I am better a great deal, ma'am:" then instantly pursued his way, as if he did not dare to utter, or wait, for another syllable.

Sandford seldom found fault with Lady Matilda; not because he loved her, but because she seldom did wrong. Upon this occasion, however, he was half inclined to reprimand her: but yet he did not know what to say;—the subsequent humility of Rushbrook had taken from the indiscretion of her speaking to him, and the event could by no means justify his censure. On hearing her begin to speak, Sandford had stopped; and as Rushbrook, after replying, walked away, Sandford called to her crossly, "Come, come along;" but at the same time he put out his elbow for her to take hold of his arm.

She hastened her steps, and did so: then, turning to Miss Woodley, she said, "I expected you would have spoken to Mr. Rushbrook: it might have prevented me."

Miss Woodley replied, "I was at a loss what to do: when we met formerly, he always spoke first."

"And he ought now," cried Sandford angrily; and then added, with a sarcastic smile, "It is certainly proper that the *superior* should be the first who speaks."

"He did not look as if he thought himself our superior," replied Matilda.

"No," returned Sandford; "some people can put on what looks they please."

"Then while he looks so pale," replied Matilda, "and so dejected, I can never forbear speaking to him when we meet, whatever he may think of it."

"And were he and I to meet a hundred, nay, a thousand times," returned Sandford, "I don't think I should ever speak to him again."

"Bless me! what for, Mr. Sandford?" cried Matilda; for Sandford, who was not a man that repeated little incidents, had never mentioned the circumstance of their quarrel.

"I have taken such a resolution," answered he; "yet I bear him no enmity."

As this short reply indicated that he meant to say no more, no more was asked; and the subject was dropped.

In the mean time, Rushbrook, happier than he had been for months, intoxicated with delight at that voluntary mark of civility he had received from Lady Matilda, felt his heart so joyous, and so free from every particle of malice, that he resolved, in the humblest manner, to make atonement for the violation of decorum he had lately committed against Mr. Sandford.

Too happy, at this time, to suffer a mortification from any indignities he might receive, he sent his servant to him into his study, as soon as he was returned home, to beg to know "if he might be permitted to wait upon him, with a message he had to deliver from Lord Elmwood."

The servant returned — "Mr. Sandford desired he would send the message by him or the house-steward." This was highly affronting; but Rushbrook was not in a humour to be offended, and he sent again, begging he would admit him; but the answer was, "he was busy."

Thus wholly defeated in his hopes of reconciliation, his new transports felt an alloy; and the few days that remained before Lord Elmwood came, he passed in solitary musing, and ineffectual walks and look towards that path in which he had met Ma-

tilda : she came that way no more ; indeed, scarce quitted her apartment, in the practice of that confinement she was to experience on the arrival of her father.

All her former agitations now returned. On the day he arrived she wept ; all the night she did not sleep ; and the name of Rushbrook again became hateful to her. The Earl came in extremely good health and spirits, but appeared concerned to find Rushbrook less well than when he went from town. Sandford was now under the necessity of being in Rushbrook's company ; yet he would never speak to him but when he was absolutely compelled, or look at him but when he could not help it. Lord Elmwood observed this conduct, yet he neither wondered nor was offended by it. He had perceived what little esteem Sandford had showed his nephew from his first return : but he forgave, in Sandford's humour, a thousand faults he would not forgive in any other ; nor did he deem this one of his greatest faults, knowing the demand upon his partiality from another object.

Miss Woodley waited on Lord Elmwood as formerly ; dined with him, and related, as heretofore, to the attentive Matilda, all that passed.

About this time Lord Margrave, deprived by the season of all the sports of the field, felt his love for Matilda (which had been violent, even though divided with the love of hunting), now too strong to be subdued ; and he resolved, though reluctantly, to apply to her father for his consent to their union ; but writing to Sandford this resolution, he was once more repulsed, and charged, as a man of honour, to forbear to disturb the tranquillity of the family by any application of the kind. To this, Sandford received no answer ; for the peer, highly incensed at his mistress's repugnance to him, determined more firmly than ever to consult his own happiness alone ; and as that depended merely upon his obtaining her, he cared not by what method it was effected.

About a fortnight after Lord Elmwood came into the country, as he was riding one morning, his horse fell with him and crushed his leg in so unfortunate a manner as to be at first pronounced of dangerous consequence. He was brought home in a post-chaise ; and Matilda heard of the accident with more

grief than would, perhaps, on such an occasion, have appertained to the most fondled child.

In consequence of the pain he suffered, his fever was one night very high; and Sandford, who seldom quitted his apartment, went frequently to his bedside, every time with the secret hope he should hear him ask to see his daughter: he was every time disappointed; yet he saw him shake, with a cordial friendship, the hand of Rushbrook, as if he delighted in seeing those he loved.

The danger in which Lord Elmwood was supposed to be was but of short duration, and his sudden recovery succeeded. Matilda, who had wept, moaned, and watched during the crisis of his illness, when she heard he was amending, exclaimed (with a kind of surprise at the novelty of the sensation)—“And this is joy that I feel! Oh, I never till now knew what those persons felt who experienced joy!”

Nor did she repine, like Mr. Sandford and Miss Woodley, at her father's inattention to her during his malady; for she did not hope like them—she did not hope he would behold her, even in dying.

But, notwithstanding his seeming indifference, while his indisposition continued, no sooner was he recovered so as to receive the congratulations of his friends, than there was no one person he evidently showed so much satisfaction at seeing as Miss Woodley. She waited upon him timorously, and with more than ordinary distaste at his late conduct, when he put out his hand with the utmost warmth to receive her, drew her to him, saluted her (an honour he had never in his life conferred before), and with signs of the sincerest friendship and affection. Sandford was present; and, ever associating the idea of Matilda with Miss Woodley, felt his heart bound with a triumph it had not enjoyed for many a day.

Matilda listened with delight to the recital Miss Woodley gave on her return, and many times while it lasted, exclaimed, “she was happy.” But poor Matilda's sudden transports of joy, which she termed happiness, were not made for long continuance; and if she ever found cause for gladness, she far oftener had motives for grief.

As Mr. Sandford was sitting with her and Miss Woodley one

evening, about a week after, a person rang at the bell, and enquired for him. On being told of it by the servant, he went to the door of the apartment, and cried, "Oh, is it you? Come in." An elderly man entered, who had been for many years the head gardener at Elmwood House—a man of honesty and sobriety, and with an indigent family of aged parents, children, and other relations, who subsisted wholly on the income arising from his place. The ladies, as well as Sandford, knew him well; and they all, almost at once, asked, "what was the matter?" for his looks told them something distressful had befallen him.

"Oh, sir," said he to Sandford, "I come to entreat your interest."

"In what, Edwards," said Sandford, with a mild voice; for, when his assistance was supplicated in distress, his rough tones always took a plaintive key.

"My Lord has discharged me from his service," returned Edwards, trembling, and the tears starting in his eyes. "I am undone, Mr. Sandford, unless you plead for me."

"I will," said Sandford, "I will."

"And yet I am almost afraid of your success," replied the man, "for my Lord has ordered me out of his house this moment; and though I knelt down to him to be heard, he had no pity."

Matilda sighed from the bottom of her heart, and yet she envied this poor man who had been kneeling to her father.

"What was your offence?" cried Sandford,

The man hesitated; then, looking at Matilda, said, "I'll tell you, sir, some other time."

"Did you name me before Lord Elmwood?" cried she, eagerly, and terrified.

"No, madam," replied he; "but I unthinkingly spoke of my poor lady who is dead and gone."

Matilda burst into tears.

"How came you to do so mad a thing?" cried Sandford; and the encouragement which his looks had once given him now fled from his face.

"It was unthinkingly," repeated Edwards: "I was showing my Lord some plans for the new walks, and told him, among other things, that her Ladyship had many years ago approved

of them.—‘Who?’ cried he.—Still I did not call to mind, but said, ‘Lady Elmwood, sir, while you were abroad.’—As soon as these words were delivered, I saw my doom in his looks, and he commanded me to quit his house and service that instant.”

“I am afraid,” said Sandford, shaking his head, “I can do nothing for you.”

“Yes, sir, you know you have more power over my Lord than any body; and, perhaps, you may be able to save me and all mine from misery.”

“I would, if I could,” replied Sandford, quickly.

“You can but try, sir.”

Matilda was all this while bathed in tears; nor was Miss Woodley much less affected. Lady Elmwood was before their eyes; Matilda beheld her in her dying moments; Miss Woodley saw her as the gay ward of Dorriforth.

“Ask Mr. Rushbrook,” said Sandford: “prevail on him to speak for you: he has more power than I have.”

“He has not enough, then,” replied Edwards; “for he was in the room with my Lord when what I have told you happened.”

“And did he say nothing?” asked Sandford.

“Yes, sir; he offered to speak in my behalf, but my Lord interrupted him, and ordered him out of the room: he instantly went.”

Sandford, now observing the effect which this narration had on the two ladies, led the man to his own apartments, and there assured him he dared not undertake his cause; but that if time or chance should happily make an alteration in his Lord’s disposition, he would be the first who would endeavour to replace him. Edwards was obliged to submit; and before the next day at noon, his pleasant house by the side of the park, his garden, and his orchard, which he had occupied above twenty years, were cleared of their old inhabitant, and all his wretched family.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THIS melancholy incident, perhaps, affected Matilda, and all the friends of the deceased Lady Elmwood, beyond any other that had occurred since her death. A few days after this circumstance, Miss Woodley, in order to divert the disconsolate mind of Lady Matilda (and in the hope of bringing her some little anecdotes to console her for that which had given her so much pain), waited upon Lord Elmwood in his library, and borrowed some books out of it. He was now perfectly well from his fall, and received her with his usual politeness, but, of course, not with that peculiar warmth which he had discovered when he received her just after his illness. Rushbrook was in the library at the same time: he showed her several beautiful prints which Lord Elmwood had just received from London, and appeared anxious to entertain and give tokens of his esteem and respect for her. But what gave her pleasure beyond any other attention was, that after she had taken (by the aid of Rushwood) about a dozen volumes from different shelves, and had laid them together, saying she would send her servant to fetch them, Lord Elmwood went carefully to the place where they were, and, taking up each book, examined minutely what it was. One author he complained was too light, another too depressing, and put them on the shelves again; another was erroneous, and he changed it for a better. Thus, he warned her against some, and selected other authors, as the most cautious preceptor culls for his pupil, or a fond father for his darling child. She thanked him for his attention to her, but her heart thanked him for his attention to his daughter: for as she had herself never received such a proof of his care since all their long acquaintance, she reasonably supposed that Matilda's reading, and not hers, was the object of his solicitude.

Having in these books store of comfort for poor Matilda, she

eagerly returned with them; and in reciting every particular circumstance, made her consider the volumes almost like presents from her father.

The month of September was now arrived; and Lord Elmwood, accompanied by Rushbrook, went to a small shooting seat, near twenty miles distant from Elmwood Castle, for a week's particular sport. Matilda was once more at large; and one beautiful morning, about eleven o'clock, seeing Miss Woodley walking on the lawn before the house, she hastily took her hat to join her; and not waiting to put it on, went nimbly down the great staircase with it hanging on her arm. When she had descended a few stairs, she heard a footstep proceeding slowly up; and (from that emotion she could not tell) she stopped short, half resolved to return back. She hesitated a single instant whether she should or not—then went a few steps further, till she came to the second landing-place; when, by the sudden winding of the staircase, Lord Elmwood was immediately before her!

She had felt something like affright before she saw him; but her reason told her she had nothing to fear, as he was away. But now the appearance of a stranger whom she had never before seen; the authority in his looks, as well as in the sound of his steps; a resemblance to the portrait she had been shown of him; a start of astonishment which he gave on beholding her; but above all, her *fears* confirmed her that it was him. She gave a scream of terror; put out her trembling hands to catch the balustrades for support—missed them—and fell motionless into her father's arms.

He caught her, as, by the same impulse, he would have caught any other person falling for want of aid. Yet when he found her in his arms, he still held her there, gazed on her attentively, and once pressed her to his bosom.

At length trying to escape the snare into which he had been led, he was going to leave her on the spot where she fell, when her eyes opened, and she uttered, "Save me!" Her voice unmanned him. His long-restrained tears now burst forth, and seeing her relapsing into the swoon, he cried out eagerly to recall her. Her name did not, however, come to his recollection—nor any name but this: "Miss Milner—dear Miss Milner!"

That sound did not awaken her; and now again he wished to leave her in this senseless state, that, not remembering what had passed, she might escape the punishment.

But at this instant Giffard, with another servant, passed by the foot of the stairs; on which Lord Elmwood called to them, and into Giffard's hands delivered his apparently dead child, without one command respecting her, or one word of any kind; while his face was agitated with shame, with pity, with anger, with paternal tenderness.

As Giffard stood trembling, while he relieved his Lord from this hapless burden, her father had to unloose her hand from the side of his coat, which she had caught fast hold of as she fell, and grasped so closely, it was with difficulty removed. On attempting to take the hand away he trembled, faltered, then bade Giffard do it.

"Who? I, my Lord! I separate you!" cried he. But recollecting himself, "My Lord, I will obey your commands whatever they are." And seizing her hand, pulled it with violence: it fell, and her father went away.

Matilda was carried to her own apartments, laid upon the bed; and Miss Woodley hastened to attend her, after listening to the recital of what had passed.

When Lady Elmwood's old and affectionate friend entered the room, and saw her youthful charge lying pale and speechless, yet no father by to comfort or soothe her, she lifted up her hands to Heaven, exclaiming, with a burst of tears, "And is this the end of thee, my poor child? Is this the end of all our hopes—of thy own fearful hopes—and of thy mother's supplications? Oh, Lord Elmwood! Lord Elmwood!"

At that time Matilda started, and cried, "Where is he? Is it a dream, or have I seen him?"

"It is all a dream, my dear," said Miss Woodley.

"And yet I thought he held me in his arms," she replied: "I thought I felt his hands press mine. Let me sleep and dream again."

Now thinking it best to undeceive her, "It is no dream, my dear," returned Miss Woodley.

"Is it not?" cried she, rising up, and leaning on her elbow.

"Then I suppose I must go away—go for ever away."

Sandford now entered. Having been told the news, he came

to condole; but at the sight of him Matilda was terrified, and cried, "Do not reproach me, do not upbraid me; I know I have done wrong—I know I had but one command from my father, and that I have disobeyed."

Sandford could not reproach her, for he could not speak: he therefore only walked to the window and concealed his tears.

That whole day and night was passed in sympathetic grief, in alarm at every sound, lest it should be a messenger to pronounce Matilda's destiny.

Lord Elmwood did not stay upon this visit above three hours at Elmwood House: he then set off again for the seat he had left, where Rushbrook still remained, and from whence his Lordship had merely come by accident to look over some writings which he wanted immediately despatched to town.

During his short continuance here Sandford cautiously avoided his presence; for he thought, in a case like this, what nature would not of herself effect, no art, no arguments of his could accomplish: to nature, then, and Providence, he left the whole. What these two powerful principles brought about, the reader will be informed, when he peruses the following letter, received early the next morning by Miss Woodley.

CHAPTER XLIV.

*A Letter from Giffard, Lord Elmwood's House Steward,
to Miss Woodley.*

"MADAM,

"MY LORD, above a twelvemonth ago, acquainted me he had permitted his daughter to reside in his house; but at the same time he informed me, the grant was under a certain restriction, which, if ever broken, I was to see his then determination (of which he also acquainted me) put in execution. In consequence of Lady Matilda's indisposition, madam, I have ventured to delay this notice till morning. I need not say with what

concern I now give it, or mention to you, I believe, what is forfeited. My Lord staid but a few hours yesterday, after the unhappy circumstance on which I write took place; nor did I see him after, till he was in his carriage: he then sent for me to the carriage door, and told me he should be back in two days' time, and added, 'Remember your duty.' That duty, I hope, madam, you will not require me to explain in more direct terms. As soon as my Lord returns, I have no doubt but he will ask me if it is fulfilled; and I shall be under the greatest apprehension, should his commands not be obeyed.

"If there is any thing wanting for the convenience of your and Lady Matilda's departure, you have but to order it, and it is at your service: I mean, likewise, any cash you may have occasion for. I should presume to add my opinion where you might best take up your abode; but with such advice as you will have from Mr. Sandford, mine would be but assuming.

"I would also have waited upon you, madam, and have delivered myself the substance of this letter; but I am an old man, and the changes I have been witness to in my Lord's house, since I first lived in it, have added, I think, to my age many a year; and I have not the strength to see you upon this occasion. I loved my Lady—I love my Lord—and I love their child: nay, so I am sure does my Lord himself; but there is no accounting for his resolutions, or for the alteration his disposition has lately undergone.

"I beg pardon, madam, for this long intrusion, and am, and ever will be (while you and my Lord's daughter are so), your afflicted humble servant,

"ROBERT GIFFARD.

"Elmwood House, Sept. 12."

When this letter was brought to Miss Woodley, she knew what it contained before she opened it, and therefore took it with an air of resignation: yet though she guessed the momentous part of its contents, she dreaded in what words it might be related; and having now no essential good to expect, hope, that will never totally expire, clung at this crisis to little circumstances; and she hoped most fervently the terms of the letter might not be harsh, but that Lord Elmwood had delivered his final sentence in gentle language. The event proved he had;

and, lost to every important comfort, she felt grateful to him for this small one.

Matilda, too, was cheered by this letter; for she expected something worse; and one of the last lines, in which Giffard said he knew "his Lordship loved her," she thought repaid her for the purport of the other part.

Sandford was not so easily resigned or comforted. He walked about the room when the letter was shown to him—called it cruel—stifled his tears, and wished to show his resentment only; but the former burst through all his endeavours, and he sunk into grief.

Nor was the fortitude of Matilda, which came to her assistance on the first onset of this trial, sufficient to arm her, when the moment came she was to quit the house—her father's house—never to see that or him again.

When word was brought that the carriage was at the door, which was to convey her from all she held so dear, and she saw before her the prospect of a long youthful and healthful life, in which misery and despair were all she could discern, that despair seized her at once, and gaining courage from her sufferings, she cried,—

"What have I to fear, if I disobey my father's commands once more? He cannot use me worse. I'll stay here till he returns—again throw myself in his way, and then I will not faint, but plead for mercy. Perhaps, were I to kneel to him—kneel, like other children to their parents—and beg his blessing, he would not refuse it me."

"You must not try," said Sandford, mildly.

"Who," cried she, "shall prevent my flying to my father? Have I another friend on earth? Have I one relation in the world but him? This is the second time I have been turned from his house. In my infant state my cruel father turned me out; but then he sent me to a mother: now I have none; and I will stay with him."

Again the steward sent to let them know the coach was waiting.

Sandford, now, with a determined countenance, went coolly up to Lady Matilda, and taking her hand, seemed resolved to lead her to the carriage.

Accustomed to be awed by every serious look of his, she yet

resisted this, and cried, "Would *you* be the minister of my father's cruelty?"

"Then," said Sandford solemnly to her, "farewell—from this moment you and I part. I will take my leave, and do you remain where you are—at least till you are forced away. But I'll not stay to be driven hence; for it is impossible your father will suffer any friend of yours to continue here after this disobedience. Adieu."

"I'll go this moment," said she, and rose hastily.

Miss Woodley took her at her word, and hurried her immediately out of the room.

Sandford followed slow behind, as if he had followed at her funeral.

When she came to that spot on the stairs where she had met her father, she started back, and scarce knew how to pass it. When she had—"There he held me in his arms," said she; "and I thought I felt him press me to his heart; but I now find I was mistaken."

As Sandford came forward to hand her into the coach—"Now you behave well," said he: "by this behaviour, you do not entirely close all prospect of reconciliation with your father."

"Do you think it is not yet impossible?" cried she, clasping his hand. "Giffard says he loves me," continued she; "and do you think he might yet be brought to forgive me?"

"Forgive you!" cried Sandford.

"Suppose I was to write to him, and entreat his forgiveness?"

"Do not write yet," said Sandford, with no cheering accent.

The carriage drove off; and as it went, Matilda leaned her head from the window, to survey Elmwood House from the roof to the foundation. She cast her eyes upon the gardens, too—upon the fish-ponds—even the coach-houses and all the offices adjoining—which, as objects that she should never see again, she contemplated as objects of importance.

CHAPTER XLV.

RUSHBROOK, who, at twenty miles' distance, could have no conjecture what had passed at Elmwood House during the short visit Lord Elmwood made there, went that way with his dogs and gun, in order to meet him on his return, and accompany him in the chaise back. He did so: and getting into the carriage, told him eagerly the sport he had had during the day; laughed at an accident that had befallen one of his dogs; and for some time did not perceive but that his uncle was perfectly attentive. At length, observing he answered more negligently than usual to what he said, Rushbrook turned his eyes quickly upon him, and cried,—

“My Lord, are you not well?”

“Yes; perfectly well, I thank you, Rushbrook,”—and he leaned back against the carriage.

“I thought, sir,” returned Rushbrook, “you spoke languidly—I beg your pardon.”

“I have the headache a little,” answered he: then taking off his hat, brushed the dust from it; and, as he put it on again, fetched a most heavy sigh, which no sooner had escaped him, than to drown its sound, he said briskly,—

“And so you tell me you have had good sport to-day?”

“No, my Lord; I said but indifferent.”

“True; so you did. Bid the man drive faster: it will be dark before we get home.

“You will shoot to-morrow, my Lord?”

“Certainly.”

“How does Mr. Sandford do, sir?”

“I did not see him.”

“Not see Mr. Sandford, my Lord! But he was out, I suppose; for they did not expect you at Elmwood House.”

“No, they did not.”

In such conversation Rushbrook and his uncle continued to

the end of their journey. Dinner was then immediately served, and Lord Elmwood appeared much in his usual spirits; at least, not suspecting any cause for their abatement, Rushbrook did not observe any alteration.

Lord Elmwood went, however, earlier to bed than ordinary, or rather to his bed-chamber; for though he retired some time before his nephew, when Rushbrook passed his chamber-door it was open, and he not in bed, but sitting in a musing posture, as if he had forgot to shut it.

When Rushbrook's valet came to attend his master, he said to him,—

"I suppose, sir, you do not know what has happened at the castle."

"For Heaven's sake, what?" cried Rushbrook.

"My Lord has met Lady Matilda," replied the man.

"How? Where? What's the consequence?"

"We don't know yet, sir; but all the servants suppose her Ladyship will not be suffered to remain there any longer."

"They all suppose wrong," returned Rushbrook, hastily: "my Lord loves her, I am certain, and this event may be the happy means of his treating her as his child from this day."

The servant smiled, and shook his head.

"Why, what more do you know?"

"Nothing more than I have told you, sir, except that his Lordship took no kind of notice of her Ladyship that appeared like love."

Rushbrook was all uneasiness and anxiety to know the particulars of what had passed; and now Lord Elmwood's inquietude, which he had but slightly noticed before, came full to his observation. He was going to ask more questions; but he recollected that Lady Matilda's misfortunes were too sacred to be talked of thus familiarly by the servants of the family: besides, it was evident this man thought, and but naturally, it might not be for his master's interest the father and the daughter should be united; and therefore would give to all he said the opposite colouring.

In spite of his prudence, however, and his delicacy towards Matilda, Rushbrook could not let his valet leave him till he had enquired, and learned all the circumstantial account of what had happened; except, indeed, the order received by Giffard,

which being given after Lord Elmwood was in his carriage, and in concise terms, the domestics, who attended him (and from whom this man had gained his intelligence) were unacquainted with it.

When the servant had left Rushbrook alone, the perturbation of his mind was so great, that he was at length undetermined, whether to go to bed, or to rush into his uncle's apartment, and at his feet beg for that compassion upon his daughter which he feared he had denied her. But then, to what peril would he not expose himself by such a step? Nay, he might, perhaps, even injure her whom he wished to serve; for if his uncle was at present unresolved whether to forgive or to resent this disobedience to his commands, another's interference might enrage and precipitate him on the latter resolution.

This consideration was so weighty, it resigned Rushbrook to the suspense he was compelled to endure till the morning, when he flattered himself, that by watching every look and motion of Lord Elmwood, his penetration would be able to discover the state of his heart, and how he meant to act.

But the morning came, and he found all his prying curiosity was of no avail: Lord Elmwood did not drop one word, give one look, or use one action that was not customary.

On first seeing him, Rushbrook blushed at the secret with which he was entrusted: then, as he gazed on the Earl, contemplated the joy he ought to have known in clasping in his arms a child like Matilda, whose tenderness, reverence, and duty, had deprived her of all sensation at his sight; which was, in Rushbrook's mind, an honour that rendered him superior to what he was before.

They were in the fields all the day as usual: Lord Elmwood now cheerful, and complaining no more of the headache. Yet, once being separated from his nephew, Rushbrook crossed over a stile into another field, and found him sitting by the side of a bank, his gun lying by him, and himself lost in thought. He rose on seeing him, and proceeded to the sport as before.

At dinner, he said he should not go to Elmwood House the next day, as he had appointed, but stay where he was three or four days longer. From these two small occurrences, Rushbrook would fain have extracted something by which to judge the state of his mind; but upon the test that was impossible;

he had caught him so musing many a time before; and as to his prolonging his stay, that might arise from the sport: or, indeed, had any thing more material swayed him, who could penetrate whether it was the effect of the lenity, or the severity, he had dealt towards his child; whether his continuance there was to shun her, or to shun the house from whence he had banished her?

The three or four days for their temporary abode being passed, they both returned together to Elmwood House. Rushbrook thought he saw his uncle's countenance change as they entered the avenue; yet he did not appear less in spirits; and when Sandford joined them at dinner, the Earl went with his usual attention to him, and (as was his custom after any separation) put out his hand cheerfully to take his. Sandford said, "How do you do, my Lord?" cheerfully in return; but put both his hands into his bosom, and walked to the other side of the room. Lord Elmwood did not seem to observe this affront; nor was it done as an affront; it was merely what poor Sandford could not help; for he felt that he could *not* shake hands with him.

Rushbrook soon learned the news that Matilda was gone; and Elmwood House was to him a desert—he saw there no real friend of hers, except poor Sandford, and to him Rushbrook knew himself now more displeasing than ever: and all his overtures of atonement he, at this time, found more and more ineffectual. Matilda was exiled; and her supposed triumphant rival was, to Sandford, odious beyond what he had ever been.

In alleviation of their banishment, Miss Woodley, with her charge, had not returned to their old retreat; but were gone to a farm-house, not farther than thirty miles from Lord Elmwood's. Here, Sandford, with little inconvenience, visited them; nor did his patron ever take notice of his occasional absence: for as he had before given his daughter, in some measure, to his charge, so honour, delicacy, and the common ties of duty, made him approve, rather than condemn, his attention to her.

Though Sandford's frequent visits soothed Matilda, they could not comfort her; for he had no consolation to bestow that was suited to her mind; her father having given no one token of

regret for what he had done. He had even enquired sternly of Giffard, on his returning home,—

“If Miss Woodley had left the house.”

The steward, guessing the whole of his meaning, answered, “Yes, my Lord; and *all* your commands in that respect have been obeyed.”

He replied, “I am satisfied;” and, to the grief of the old man, he appeared really so.

To the farm-house, the place of Matilda’s residence, there came besides Sandford, another visiter far less welcome—Viscount Margrave. He had heard with surprise, and still greater joy, that Lord Elmwood had once more closed his doors against his daughter. In this, her discarded state, he no longer burdened his lively imagination with the dull thoughts of marriage, but once more formed the barbarous design of making her his mistress.

Ignorant of a certain decorum which attended all Lord Elmwood’s actions, he suspected that his child might be in want; and an acquaintance with the worst part of her sex informed him, that relief from poverty was the sure bargain for his success. With these hopes he again paid Miss Woodley and her a visit; but the coldness of the former, and the haughtiness of the latter, still kept him at a distance, and again made him fear to give one allusion to his purpose: but he returned home, resolved to write what he durst not speak. He did so—he offered his services, his purse, his house: they were rejected with disdain, and a stronger prohibition than ever given to his visits.

CHAPTER XLVI.

LORD ELMWOOD had now allowed Rushbrook a long vacation, in respect to his answer upon the subject of marriage; and the young man vainly imagined his intentions upon that subject were entirely given up. One morning, however, as he was with him in the library,—

"Henry," said his uncle, with a pause at the beginning of his speech, which indicated that he was going to say something of importance,— "Henry—you have not forgot the discourse I had with you a little time previous to your illness?"

Henry paused too—for he wished to have forgotten it—but it was too strongly impressed upon his memory. Lord Elmwood resumed,—

"What! equivocating again, sir? Do you remember it, or do you not?"

"Yes, my Lord, I do."

"And are you prepared to give me an answer?"

Rushbrook paused again.

"In our former conversation," continued the Earl, "I gave you but a week to determine: there has, I think, elapsed since that time half a year."

"About as much, sir."

"Then surely you have now made up your mind?"

"I had done that at first, my Lord, if it had met with your concurrence."

"You wished to lead a bachelor's life, I think you said?"

Rushbrook bowed.

"Contrary to my will?"

"No, my Lord, I wished to have your approbation."

"And you wished for my approbation of the very opposite thing to that which I proposed? But I am not surprised: such is the gratitude of the world; and such is yours."

"My Lord, if you doubt my gratitude——"

"Give me a proof of it, Harry, and I will doubt no longer."

"Upon every other subject but this, my Lord, Heaven is my witness that your desires——"

Lord Elmwood interrupted him: "I understand you: upon every other subject, but the only one which my content requires, you are ready to obey me. I thank you."

"My Lord, do not torture me with this suspicion: it is so contrary to my deserts, that I cannot bear it."

"Suspicion of your ingratitude! you judge too favourably of my opinion—it amounts to certainty."

"Then to convince you, sir, I am not ungrateful—tell me who the lady is you have chosen for me, and here I give you my word, I will sacrifice all my future prospects of happiness——"

all, for which I would wish to live—and become her husband as soon as you shall appoint.”

This was spoken with a tone so expressive of despair, that Lord Elmwood replied,—

“And while you obey me, you take care to let me know it will cost you your future peace. This is, I suppose, to enhance the merit of the obligation—but I shall not accept your acquiescence on these terms.”

“Then, in dispensing with it, I hope for your pardon.”

“Do you suppose, Rushbrook, I can pardon an offence, the sole foundation of which arises from a spirit of disobedience? for you have declared to me your affections are disengaged. In our last conversation did you not say so?”

“At first I did, my Lord: but you permitted me to consult my heart more closely; and I have since found that I was mistaken.”

“You then own you at first told me a falsehood, and yet have all this time kept me in suspense without confessing it.”

“I waited, my Lord, till you should inquire——”

“You have then, sir, waited too long,” and the fire flashed from his eyes.

Rushbrook now found himself in that perilous state that admitted of no medium of resentment, but by such dastardly conduct on his part as would wound both his truth and courage; and thus, animated by his danger, he was resolved to plunge boldly at once into the depth of his patron’s anger.

“My Lord,” said he (but he did not undertake this task without sustaining the trembling and convulsion of his whole frame), —“My Lord—waving for a moment the subject of my marriage—permit me to remind you, that when I was upon my sick bed you promised, that on my recovery you would listen to a petition I should offer to you.”

“Let me recollect,” replied he. “Yes; I do remember something of it. But I said nothing to warrant any improper petition.”

“Its impropriety was not named, my Lord.”

“No matter,—that you must judge of, and answer for the consequences.”

“I would answer with my life, willingly; but I own that I shrink from your displeasure.”

"Then do not provoke it."

"I have already gone too far to recede; and you would of course demand an explanation, if I attempted to stop here."

"I should."

"Then, my Lord, I am bound to speak; but do not interrupt me: hear me out, before you banish me from your presence for ever."

"I will, sir," replied he, prepared to hear something that would excite his resentment, and yet determined to hear with patience to the conclusion.

"Then, my Lord," cried Rushbrook, in the greatest agitation of mind and body, "your daughter——"

The resolution Lord Elmwood had taken (and on which he had given his word to his nephew not to interrupt him) immediately gave way. The colour rose in his face, his eye darted lightning, and his hand was lifted up with the emotion that word had created.

"You promised to hear me, my Lord," cried Rushbrook, "and I claim your promise."

He now suddenly overcame his violence of passion, and stood silent and resigned to hear him; but with a determined look, expressive of the vengeance that should ensue.

"Lady Matilda," resumed Rushbrook, "is an object that wrests from me the enjoyment of every blessing your kindness bestows. I cannot but feel myself as her adversary—as one who has supplanted her in your affections—who supplies her place while she is exiled, a wanderer, and an orphan."

The Earl took his eyes from Rushbrook during this last sentence, and cast them on the floor.

"If I feel gratitude towards you, my Lord," continued he, "gratitude is innate in my heart; and I must also feel it towards *her* who first introduced me to your protection."

Again the colour flew to Lord Elmwood's face, and again he could hardly restrain himself from uttering his indignation.

"It was the mother of Lady Matilda," continued Rushbrook, "who was this friend to me; nor will I ever think of marriage, or any other joyful prospect, while you abandon the only child of my beloved patroness, and load me with rights which belong to her."

Here Rushbrook stopped: Lord Elmwood was silent too, for

near half a minute; but still his countenance continued fixed with his unvaried resolves.

After this long pause, the Earl said with composure, which denoted firmness, "Have you finished, Mr. Rushbrook?"

"All that I dare to utter, my Lord; and I fear I have already said too much."

Rushbrook now trembled more than ever, and looked pale as death; for the ardour of speaking being over, he waited his sentence with less constancy of mind than he expected he should.

"You disapprove my conduct, it seems," said Lord Elmwood; "and in that you are but like the rest of the world; and yet, among all my acquaintance, you are the only one who has dared to insult me with your opinion. And this you have not done inadvertently, but willingly and deliberately. But as it has been my fate to be used ill, and severed from all those persons to whom my soul has been most attached, with less regret I can part from you than if this were my first trial."

There was a truth and a pathetic sound in the utterance of these words that struck Rushbrook to the heart; and he beheld himself as a barbarian, who had treated his benevolent and only friend with insufferable liberty—void of respect for those corroding sorrows which had embittered so many years of his life, and in open violation of his most peremptory commands. He felt that he deserved all he was going to suffer, and he fell upon his knees; not so much to deprecate the doom he saw impending, as thus humbly to acknowledge it was his due.

Lord Elmwood, irritated by this posture, as a sign of the presumptuous hope that he might be forgiven, suffered now his anger to burst all bounds; and, raising his voice, he exclaimed with rage,—

"Leave my house, sir. Leave my house instantly, and seek some other home."

Just as these words were begun, Sandford opened the library door, was witness to them, and to the imploring situation of Rushbrook. He stood silent with amazement.

Rushbrook arose, and feeling in his mind a presage that he might never from that hour behold his benefactor more, as he bowed in token of obedience to his commands, a shower of tears covered his face; but Lord Elmwood, unmoved, fixed his eyes upon him, which pursued him with enraged looks to the

end of the room. Here he had to pass Sandford; who, for the first time in his life, took hold of him by the hand, and said to Lord Elmwood, "My Lord, what's the matter?"

"That ungrateful villain," cried he, "has dared to insult me. Leave my house this moment, sir."

Rushbrook made an effort to go, but Sandford still held his hand; and meekly said to Lord Elmwood,—

"He is but a boy, my Lord, and do not give him the punishment of a man."

Rushbrook now snatched his hand from Sandford's, and threw it with himself upon his neck, where he indeed sobbed like a boy.

"You are both in league," exclaimed Lord Elmwood.

"Do you suspect me of partiality to Mr. Rushbrook?" said Sandford, advancing nearer to the Earl.

Rushbrook had now gained the point of remaining in the room; but the hope that privilege inspired (while he still harboured all the just apprehensions for his fate), gave birth, perhaps, to a more exquisite sensation of pain than despair would have done. He stood silent—confounded;—hoping that he was forgiven—fearing that he was not.

As Sandford approached still nearer to Lord Elmwood, he continued, "No, my Lord; I know you do not suspect me of partiality to Mr. Rushbrook. Has any part of my behaviour ever discovered it?"

"You now, then, only interfere to irritate me."

"If that were the case," returned Sandford, "there have been occasions when I might have done it more effectually;—when my own heart-strings were breaking, because I would not irritate, or add to what you suffered."

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Sandford," he returned mildly and thankfully.

"And if, my Lord, I have proved any merit in a late forbearance, reward me for it now; and take this young man from the depth of sorrow in which I see he is sunk, and say you pardon him."

Lord Elmwood made no answer; and Rushbrook, drawing strong inferences of hope from his silence, lifted up his eyes from the ground, and ventured to look in his face: he found it serene to what it had been, but still strongly marked with agitation. He cast his eyes away again, in shame and confusion.

On which his uncle said to him, "I shall postpone the exacting of your obedience to my late orders, till you think fit once more to provoke them; and then, not even Sandford shall dare to plead your excuse."

Rushbrook bowed.

"Go, leave the room, sir."

He instantly obeyed.

Then Sandford, turning to Lord Elmwood, shook him by the hand, and cried, "My Lord, I thank you—I thank you very kindly, my Lord: I shall now begin to think I have some weight with you."

"You might, indeed, think so, did you know how much I have pardoned."

"What was his offence, my Lord?"

"Such as I would not have forgiven you, or any earthly being besides himself; but while you were speaking in his behalf, I recollected there was a gratitude so extraordinary in the hazards he ran, that almost made him pardonable."

"I guess the subject, then," cried Sandford; "and yet I could not have supposed——"

"It is a subject we cannot speak on, Sandford; therefore let us drop it."

At these words the discourse concluded.

CHAPTER XLVII.

To the relief of Rushbrook, Lord Elmwood that day dined from home, and he had not the confusion to see him again till the evening. Previous to this, Sandford and he met at dinner; but as the attendants were present, nothing passed on either side respecting the incident in the morning. Rushbrook, from the peril which had so lately threatened him, was now in his perfectly cool and dispassionate senses; and notwithstanding the real tenderness which he bore to the daughter of his benefactor, he was not insensible to the comfort of finding himself once

more in the possession of all those enjoyments he had forfeited, and for a moment lost.

As he reflected on this, to Sandford he felt the first tie of acknowledgment; but for his compassion, he knew he should have been, at that very time of their meeting at dinner, away from Elmwood House for ever, and bearing on his mind a still more painful recollection,—the burden of his kind patron's continual displeasure. Filled with these thoughts, all the time of dinner, he could scarce look at his companion without tears of gratitude; and whenever he attempted to speak to him, gratitude choked his utterance.

Sandford, on his part, behaved just the same as ever; and to show he did not wish to remind Rushbrook of what he had done, he was just as uncivil as ever.

Among other things, he said, "He did not know Lord Elmwood dined from home; for if he had, he should have dined in his own apartment."

Rushbrook was still more obliged to him for all this; and the weight of obligations with which he was oppressed made him long for an opportunity to relieve himself by expressions. As soon, therefore, as the servants were all withdrawn, he began,—

"Mr. Sandford, whatever has been your opinion of *me*, I take pride to myself, that in my sentiments towards *you* I have always distinguished you for that humane, disinterested character, you have this day proved."

"Humane and disinterested," replied Sandford, "are flattering epithets, indeed, for an old man going out of the world, and who can have no temptation to be otherwise."

"Then suffer me to call your actions generous and compassionate, for they have saved me——"

"I know, young man," cried Sandford, interrupting him, "you are glad at what I have done, and that you find a gratification in telling me you are; but it is a gratification I will not indulge you with: therefore, say another sentence on the subject, and" (rising from his seat) "I'll leave the room, and never come into your company again, whatever your uncle may say to it."

Rushbrook saw by the solemnity of his countenance he was serious, and positively assured him he would never thank him

more; on which Sandford took his seat again, but he still frowned, and it was many minutes before he conquered his ill-humour. As his countenance became less sour, Rushbrook fell from some general topics he had eagerly started in order to appease him, and said,

"How hard is it to restrain conversation from the subject of our thoughts! And yet amidst our dearest friends, and among persons who have the same dispositions and sentiments as our own, their minds, too, fixed upon the self-same objects, this constraint is practised; and thus society, which was meant for one of our greatest blessings, becomes insipid, nay, often more wearisome than solitude."

"I think, young man," replied Sandford, "you have made pretty free with your speech to-day, and ought not to complain of the want of toleration on that score."

"I do complain," replied Rushbrook; "for if toleration were more frequent, the favour of obtaining it would be less."

"And your pride, I suppose, is above receiving a favour."

"Never from those I esteem; and to convince you of it, I wish this moment to request a favour of you."

"I dare say I shall refuse it. However, what is it?"

"Permit me to speak to you upon the subject of Lady Matilda."

Sandford made no answer, consequently did not forbid him; and he proceeded,—

"For her sake—as I suppose Lord Elmwood may have told you—I this morning rashly threw myself into the predicament from whence you released me: for her sake I have suffered much; for her sake I have hazarded a great deal, and am still ready to hazard more."

"But for your own sake, do not," returned Sandford, dryly.

"You may laugh at these sentiments as romantic, Mr. Sandford; but if they are, to me they are nevertheless natural."

"But of what service are they to be either to her or to yourself?"

"To me they are painful, and to her would be but impertinent, were she to know them."

"I sha'n't inform her of them; so do not trouble yourself to caution me against it."

“I was not going—you know I was not—but I was going to say, that from no one so well as from you could she be told my sentiments without the danger of receiving offence.”

“And what impression do you wish to give her, from her becoming acquainted with them?”

“The impression that she has one sincere friend; that upon every occurrence in life there is a heart so devoted to all she feels, that she never can suffer without the sympathy of another; or can ever command him and all his fortunes, to unite for her welfare, without his ready, his immediate compliance.”

“And do you imagine that any of your professions, or any of her necessities, would ever prevail upon her to put you to the trial?”

“Perhaps not.”

“What, then, are the motives which induce you to wish her to be told of this?”

Rushbrook hesitated.

“Do you think,” continued Sandford, “the intelligence will give her any satisfaction?”

“Perhaps not.”

“Will it be of any to yourself?”

“The highest in the world.”

“And so all you have been urging upon this occasion is, at last, only to please yourself.”

“You wrong my meaning: it is her merit which inspires me with the desire of being known to her: it is her sufferings, her innocence, her beauty——”

Sandford stared; Rushbrook proceeded: “It is her——”

“Nay, stop where you are,” cried Sandford: “you are arrived at the zenith of perfection in a woman, and to add one qualification more would be an anti-climax.”

“Oh,” cried Rushbrook, with warmth, “I loved her before I ever beheld her.”

“Loved her!” cried Sandford, with marks of astonishment: “you are talking of what you did not intend.”

“I am, indeed,” returned he, in confusion: “I fell by accident on the word love.”

“And by the same accident stumbled on the word beauty; and thus by accident am I come to the truth of all your professions.”

Rushbrook knew that he loved; and though his affection had sprung from the most laudable motives, yet was he ashamed of it as of a vice: he rose, he walked about the room, and he did not look Sandford in the face for a quarter of an hour. Sandford, satisfied that he had judged rightly, and yet unwilling to be too hard upon a passion which he readily believed must have had many noble virtues for its foundation, now got up and went away, without saying a word in censure, though not a word in approbation.

It was in the month of October, and just dark at the time Rushbrook was left alone, yet in the agitation of his mind, arising from the subject on which he had been talking, he found it impossible to remain in the house, and therefore walked into the fields. But there was another instigation more powerful than the necessity of walking: it was the allurements of passing along that path where he had last seen Lady Matilda; and where, for the only time, she had condescended to speak to him divested of haughtiness, and with a gentleness that dwelt upon his memory beyond all her other endowments.

Here he retraced his own steps repeatedly, his whole imagination engrossed with her idea, till the sound of her father's carriage returning from his visit roused him from the delusion of his trance, to the dread of the embarrassment he should endure on next meeting him. He hoped Sandford might be present; and yet he was now almost as much ashamed of seeing him as his uncle, whom he had so lately offended.

Loath to leave the spot where he was, as to enter the house, he remained there, till he considered it would be ill manners, in his present humiliated situation, not to show himself at the usual supper hour, which was now nearly arrived.

As he laid his hand upon the door of the apartment to open it, he was sorry to hear by Lord Elmwood's voice he was in the room before him; for there was something much more conspicuously distressing in entering where he already was, than had his uncle come in after him. He found himself, however, re-assured, by overhearing the Earl laugh, and speak in a tone expressive of the utmost good humour to Sandford, who was with him.

Yet again, he felt all the awkwardness of his own situation; but, making one courageous effort, opened the door and en-

tered. Lord Elmwood had been away half the day, had dined abroad, and it was necessary to take some notice of his return. Rushbrook, therefore, bowed humbly; and, what was more to his advantage, he looked humbly. His uncle made a slight return to the salutation, but continued the recital he had begun to Sandford; then sat down to the supper-table—supped—and passed the whole evening without saying a syllable, or even casting a look, in remembrance of what had passed in the morning. Or, if there was any token that showed he remembered the circumstance at all, it was the putting his glass to his nephew's, when Rushbrook called for wine, and drinking at the time he did.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE repulse Lord Margrave received did not diminish the ardour of his pursuit; for as he was no longer afraid of resentment from the Earl, whatever treatment his daughter might receive, he was determined the anger of Lady Matilda, or of her female friend, should not impede his pretensions.

Having taken this resolution, he laid the plan of an open violation of laws both human and divine; and he determined to bear away that prize by force, which no art was likely to procure. He concerted with two of his favourite companions; but their advice was, "One struggle more of fair means." This was totally against his inclination; for he had much rather have encountered the piercing cries of a female in the last agonies of distress, than the fatigue of her sentimental harangues, or elegant reproofs, such as he had the sense to understand, but not the capacity to answer.

Stimulated, however, by his friends to one more trial, in spite of the formal dismissal he had twice received, he intruded another visit on Lady Matilda at the farm. Provoked beyond bearing at such unfeeling assurance, Matilda refused to

come into the room where he was, and Miss Woodley alone received him, and expressed her surprise at the little attention he had paid to her explicit desire.

"Madam," replied the nobleman, "to be plain with you, I am in love."

"I do not the least doubt it, my Lord," replied Miss Woodley: "nor ought you to doubt the truth of what I advance, when I assure you, that you have not the smallest reason to hope your love will be returned; for Lady Matilda is resolved never to listen to your passion."

"That man," he replied, "is to blame, who can relinquish his hopes upon the mere resolution of a lady."

"And that lady would be wrong," replied Miss Woodley, "who should intrust her happiness in the care of a man who can think thus meanly of her and of her sex."

"I think highly of them all," he replied; "and to convince you in how high an estimation I hold her in particular, my whole fortune is at her command."

"Your entire absence from this house, my Lord, she would consider as a much greater mark of your respect."

A long conversation, as uninteresting as the foregoing, ensued, when the unexpected arrival of Mr. Sandford put an end to it. He started at the sight of Lord Margrave; but the Viscount was much more affected at the sight of him.

"My Lord," said Sandford boldly to him, "have you received any encouragement from Lady Matilda to authorise this visit?"

"None, upon my honour, Mr. Sandford; but I hope you know how to pardon a lover!"

"A rational one I do; but you, my Lord, are not of that class while you persecute the pretended object of your affection."

"Do you call it persecution that I once offered her a share of my title and fortune; and even now, declare my fortune to be at her disposal?"

Sandford was uncertain whether he understood his meaning; but Lord Margrave, provoked at his ill reception, felt a triumph in removing his doubts, and proceeded thus:—

"For the discarded daughter of Lord Elmwood cannot expect the same proposals which I made, while she was acknowledged and under the protection of her father."

"What proposals, then, my Lord?" asked Sandford, hastily.

"Such," replied he, "as the Duke of Avon made to her mother."

Miss Woodley quitted the room that instant. But Sandford, who never felt resentment but against those in whom he saw some virtue, calmly replied,—

"My Lord, the Duke of Avon was a gentleman, a man of elegance and breeding; and what have you to offer in recompense for your defects in qualities like these?"

"My wealth," replied he, "opposed to her indigence."

Sandford smiled, and answered,—

"Do you suppose *that* wealth can be esteemed, which has not been able to make you respectable? What is it makes wealth valuable? Is it the pleasures of the table; the pleasure of living in a fine house, or of wearing fine clothes? These are pleasures a lord enjoys but in common with his valet. It is the pleasure of being conspicuous which makes riches desirable; but if we are conspicuous only for our vice and folly, had we not better remain in poverty?"

"You are beneath my notice."

"I trust I shall continue so; and that your Lordship will never again condescend to come where I am."

"A man of rank condescends to mix with any society, when a pretty woman is the object."

"My Lord, I have a book here in my pocket, which I am eager to read: it is an author who speaks sense and reason. Will you pardon the impatience I feel for such company, and permit me to call your carriage?"

Saying this, he went hastily and beckoned to the coachman. The carriage drove up, the door was opened, and Lord Margrave, ashamed to be exposed before his attendants, and convinced of the inutility of remaining any longer where he was, departed.

Sandford was soon joined by the ladies; and the conversation falling, of course, upon the nobleman who had just taken his leave, Sandford unwarily exclaimed, "I wish Rushbrook had been here."

"Who?" cried Lady Matilda.

"I do believe," said Miss Woodley, "that young man has some good qualities."

"A great many," returned Sandford, mutteringly.

"Happy young man!" cried Matilda: "he is beloved by all those whose affection it would be my choice to possess, beyond any other blessing this word could bestow."

"And yet I question if Rushbrook be happy," said Sandford.

"He cannot be otherwise," returned Matilda, "if he is a man of understanding."

"He does not want understanding neither," replied Sandford, "although he has certainly many indiscretions."

"But which Lord Elmwood, I suppose," said Matilda, "looks upon with tenderness."

"Not upon all his faults," answered Sandford; "for I have seen him in very dangerous circumstances with your father."

"Have you, indeed?" cried Matilda: "then I pity him."

"And I believe," said Miss Woodley, "that from his heart he compassionates you. Now, Mr. Sandford," continued she, "though this is the first time I ever heard you speak in his favour (and I once thought as differently of Mr. Rushbrook as you can do), yet now I will venture to ask you, whether you do not think he wishes Lady Matilda much happier than she is?"

"I have heard him say so," answered Sandford.

"It is a subject," returned Lady Matilda, which I did not imagine you, Mr. Sandford, would have permitted him to have mentioned lightly in your presence."

"Lightly! Do you suppose, my dear, we turned your situation into ridicule?"

"No, sir; but there is a sort of humiliation in the grief to which I am doomed that ought surely to be treated with the highest degree of delicacy by my friends."

"I don't know on what point you fix real delicacy; but if it consists in sorrow, the young man gives a proof he possesses it, for he shed tears when I last heard him mention your name."

"I have more cause to weep at the mention of his."

"Perhaps so; but let me tell you, Lady Matilda, that your father might have preferred a more unworthy object."

"Still had he been to me," she cried, "an object of envy. And as I frankly confess my envy of Mr. Rushbrook, I hope you will pardon my malice, which is, you know, but a consequent crime."

The subject now turned again upon Lord Margrave; and all

of them being firmly persuaded this last reception would put an end to every further intrusion from him, they treated his pretensions, and himself, with the contempt they inspired, but not with the caution that was requisite.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE next morning, early, Mr. Sandford returned to Elmwood House, but with his spirits depressed, and his heart overcharged with sorrow. He had seen Lady Matilda, the object of his visit; but he had beheld her considerably altered in her looks and in her health. She was become very thin; and instead of the vivid bloom that used to adorn her cheeks, her whole complexion was of a deadly pale; her countenance no longer expressed hope of fear, but a fixed melancholy: she shed no tears, but was all sadness. He had beheld this, and he had heard her insulted by the licentious proposals of a nobleman, from whom there was no satisfaction to be demanded, because she had no friend to vindicate her honour.

Rushbrook, who suspected where Sandford was gone, and imagined he would return on the following day, took his morning's ride, so as to meet him on the road, at the distance of a few miles from the castle; for, since his perilous situation with Lord Elmwood, he was so fully convinced of the general philanthropy of Sandford's character, that in spite of his churlish manners he now addressed him, free from that reserve to which his rough behaviour had formerly given birth. And Sandford, on his part, believing he had formed an illiberal opinion of Lord Elmwood's heir, though he took no pains to let him know that his opinion was changed, yet resolved to make him restitution upon every occasion that offered.

Their mutual greetings, when they met, were unceremonious, but cordial; and Rushbrook turned his horse and rode back with Sandford: yet intimidated by his respect and tenderness for Lady Matilda, rather than by fear of the rebuffs of his

companion, he had not the courage to name her, till the ride was just finished, and they came within a few yards of the house. Incited then by the apprehension he might not soon again enjoy so fit an opportunity, he said,—

“Pardon me, Mr. Sandford, if I guess where you have been, and if my curiosity forces me to enquire for Miss Woodley’s and Lady Matilda’s health.”

He named Miss Woodley first, to prolong the time before he mentioned Matilda; for though to name her gave him extreme pleasure, yet it was a pleasure accompanied by confusion and pain.

“They are both very well,” replied Sandford: “at least they did not complain they were sick.”

“They are not in spirits, I suppose?” said Rushbrook.

“No, indeed,” replied Sandford, shaking his head.

“No new misfortune has happened, I hope?” cried Rushbrook; for it was plain to see Sandford’s spirits were unusually cast down.

“Nothing new,” returned he, “except the insolence of a young nobleman.”

“What nobleman?” cried Rushbrook.

“A lover of Lady Matilda’s,” replied Sandford.

Rushbrook was petrified. “Who? what lover, Mr. Sandford? Explain.”

They were now arrived at the house; and Sandford, without making any reply to this question, said to the servant who took his horse, “She has come a long way this morning: take care of her.”

This interruption was torture to Rushbrook, who kept close to his side in order to obtain a further explanation; but Sandford, without attending to him, walked negligently into the hall, and, before they advanced many steps, they were met by Lord Elmwood.

All further information was put an end to for the present.

“How do you do, Sandford,” said Lord Elmwood, with extreme kindness, as if he thanked him for the journey which, it was likely, he suspected he had been taking.

“I am indifferently well, my Lord,” replied he, with a face of deep concern, and a tear in his eye, partly in gratitude for his patron’s civility, and partly in reproach for his cruelty.

It was not now till the evening that Rushbrook had an opportunity of renewing the conversation which had been so painfully interrupted.

In the evening, no longer able to support the suspense into which he was thrown, without fear or shame, he followed Sandford into his chamber at the time of his retreating, and entreated of him, with all the anxiety he suffered, to explain his allusion when he talked of a lover, and of insolence to Lady Matilda.

Sandford, seeing his emotion, was angry with himself that he had inadvertently mentioned the circumstance; and putting on an air of surly importance, desired, if he had any business with him, that he would call in the morning.

Exasperated at so unexpected a reception, and at the pain of his disappointment, Rushbrook replied, "He treated him cruelly; nor would he stir out of his room, till he had received a satisfactory answer to his question."

"Then bring your bed," replied Sandford, "for you must pass your whole night here."

He found it vain to think of obtaining any intelligence by threats: he therefore said, in a timid and persuasive manner,—

"Did you, Mr. Sandford, hear Lady Matilda mention my name?"

"Yes," replied Sandford, a little better reconciled to him.

"Did you tell her what I lately declared to you?" he asked, with still more diffidence.

"No," replied Sandford.

"It is very well, sir," returned he, vexed to the heart, yet again wishing to soothe him.

"You certainly, Mr. Sandford, know what is for the best: yet I entreat you will give me some further account of the nobleman you named."

"I know what is for the best," replied Sandford, "and I won't."

Rushbrook bowed, and immediately left the room. He went apparently submissive: but the moment he showed this submission, he took the resolution of paying a visit himself to the farm at which Lady Matilda resided; and of learning, either from Miss Woodley, the people of the house, the neighbours,

or perhaps from Lady Matilda's own lips, the secret which the obstinacy of Sandford had withheld.

He saw all the dangers of this undertaking ; but none appeared so great as the danger of losing her he loved, by the influence of a rival ; and though Sandford had named "insolence," he was in doubt whether what had appeared so to him was so in reality, or would be so considered by her.

To prevent the cause of his absence being suspected by Lord Elmwood, he immediately called his groom, ordered his horse, and giving those servants concerned a strict charge of secrecy, with some frivolous pretence to apologise for his not being present at breakfast (resolving to be back by dinner), he set off that night, and arrived at an inn about a mile from the farm at break of day.

The joy he felt when he found himself so near to the beloved object of his journey, made him thank Sandford in his heart for the unkindness which had sent him thither. But new difficulties arose, how to accomplish the end for which he came. He learned from the people of the inn, that a lord, with a fine equipage, had visited at the farm ; but who he was, or for what purpose he went, no one could inform him.

Dreading to return with his doubts unsatisfied, and yet afraid of proceeding to extremities that might be construed into presumption, he walked disconsolately (almost distractedly) across the fields, looking repeatedly at his watch, and wishing the time would stand still till he was ready to go back with his errand completed.

Every field he passed brought him nearer to the house on which his imagination was fixed ; but how, without forfeiting every appearance of that respect which he so powerfully felt, could he attempt to enter it ? He saw the indecorum, resolved not to be guilty of it, and yet walked on till he was within but a small orchard of the door. Could he then retreat ? He wished he could ; but he found that he had proceeded too far to be any longer master of himself. The time was urgent : he must either behold her, and venture her displeasure, or by diffidence during one moment, give up all his hopes, perhaps, for ever.

With that same disregard to consequences which actuated him when he dared to supplicate Lord Elmwood in his

daughter's behalf, he at length went eagerly to the door and rapped.

A servant came: he asked to "speak with Miss Woodley, if she was quite alone."

He was shown into an apartment, and Miss Woodley entered to him.

She started when she beheld who it was; but as he did not see a frown upon her face, he caught hold of her hand, and said, persuasively,—

"Do not be offended with me. If I mean to offend you, may I forfeit my life in atonement."

Poor Miss Woodley, glad in her solitude to see any one from Elmwood House, forgot his visit was an offence, till he put her in mind of it: she then said, with some reserve,—

"Tell me the purport of your coming, sir, and perhaps I may have no reason to complain."

"It was to see Lady Matilda," he replied, "or to hear of her health. It was to offer her my services—it was, Miss Woodley, to convince her, if possible, of my esteem."

"Had you no other method, sir?" said Miss Woodley, with the same reserve.

"None," replied he, "or with joy I should have embraced it; and if you can inform me of any other, tell me, I beseech you, instantly, and I will immediately be gone, and pursue your directions."

Miss Woodley hesitated.

"You know of no other means, Miss Woodley?" he cried.

"And yet I cannot commend this," said she.

"Nor do I. Do not imagine, because you see me here, that I approve of my visit; but, reduced to this necessity, pity the motives that have urged it."

Miss Woodley did pity them; but as she would not own that she did, she could think of nothing else to say.

At this instant a bell rung from the chamber above.

"That is Lady Matilda's bell," said Miss Woodley: "she is coming to take a short walk. Do you wish to see her?"

Though it was the first wish of his heart, he paused, and said, "Will you plead my excuse?"

As the flight of stairs was but short, which Matilda had to

come down, she was in the room with Miss Woodley and Mr. Rushbrook just as that sentence ended.

She had stepped beyond the door of the apartment, when, perceiving a visiter, she hastily withdrew.

Rushbrook, animated, though trembling at her presence, cried, "Lady Matilda, do not avoid me, till you know that I deserve such a punishment."

She immediately saw who it was, and returned back with a proper pride, and yet a proper politeness in her manner.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said she: "I did not know you. I was afraid I intruded upon Miss Woodley and a stranger."

"You do not then consider me as a stranger, Lady Matilda? And that you do not, requires my warmest acknowledgments."

She sat down, as if overcome by ill spirits and ill health.

Miss Woodley now asked Rushbrook to sit; for till now she had not.

"No, madam," replied he, with confusion; "not unless Lady Matilda gives me permission."

She smiled, and pointed to a chair; and all the kindness which Rushbrook during his whole life had received from Lord Elmwood never inspired half the gratitude which this one instance of civility from his daughter excited.

He sat down with the confession of the obligation upon every feature of his face.

"I am not well, Mr. Rushbrook," said Matilda, languidly; "and you must excuse any want of etiquette at this house."

"While you excuse me, madam, what can I have to complain of?"

She appeared absent while he was speaking, and turning to Miss Woodley, said, "Do you think I had better walk to-day?"

"No, my dear," answered Miss Woodley: "the ground is damp, and the air cold."

"You are not well, indeed, Lady Matilda," said Rushbrook, gazing upon her with the most tender respect.

She shook her head; and the tears, without any effort either to impel or to restrain them, ran down her face.

Rushbrook rose from his seat, and, with an accent and manner the most expressive, said, "We are cousins, Lady Matilda:

in our infancy we were brought up together : we were beloved by the same mother ; fostered by the same father——”

“ Oh, oh !” cried she, interrupting him with a tone which indicated the bitterest anguish.

“ Nay, do not let me add to your uneasiness,” he resumed, “ while I am attempting to alleviate it. Instruct me what I can do to show my esteem and respect, rather than permit me, thus unguided, to rush upon what you may construe into insult and arrogance.”

Miss Woodley went to Matilda, took her hand, then wiped the tears from her eyes, while Matilda reclined against her, entirely regardless of Rushbrook’s presence.

“ If I have been in the least instrumental to this sorrow”—— said Rushbrook, with a face as much agitated as his mind.

“ No ” said Miss Woodley, in a low voice, “ you have not—— she is often thus.”

“ Yes,” said Matilda, raising her head ; “ I am frequently so weak, that I cannot resist the smallest incitement to grief. But do not make your visit long, Mr. Rushbrook,” she continued ; “ for I was just then thinking, that should Lord Elmwood hear of this attention you have paid me, it might be fatal to you.” Here she wept again, as bitterly as before.

“ There is no probability of his hearing of it, madam,” Rushbrook replied ; “ or if there was, I am persuaded that he would not resent it ; for yesterday, when I am confident he knew that Mr. Sandford had been to see you, he received him on his return with unusual marks of kindness.”

“ Did he ?” said she ; and again she lifted up her head, her eyes for a moment beaming with hope and joy.

“ There is something which we cannot yet define,” said Rushbrook, “ that Lord Elmwood struggles with ; but when time shall have eradicated——”

Before he could proceed further, Matilda was once more sunk into despondency, and scarcely attended to what he was saying.

Miss Woodley, observing this, said, “ Mr. Rushbrook, let it be a token we shall be glad to see you hereafter, that I now use the freedom to beg you will put an end to your visit.”

“ You send me away, madam,” returned he, “ with the warmest thanks for the reception you have given me ; and this last assurance of your kindness is beyond any other favour you

could have bestowed. Lady Matilda," added he, "suffer me to take your hand at parting, and let it be a testimony that you acknowledge me for a relation."

She put out her hand, which he knelt to receive, but did not raise it to his lips. He held the boon too sacred; and looking earnestly upon it, as it lay pale and wan in his, he breathed one sigh over it, and withdrew.

CHAPTER L.

SORROWFUL and affecting as this interview had been, Rushbrook, as he rode home, reflected upon it with the most inordinate delight; and had he not seen decline of health in the looks and behaviour of Lady Matilda, his felicity had been unbounded. Entranced in the happiness of her society, the thought of his rival never came once to his mind while he was with her: a want of recollection, however, he by no means regretted, as her whole appearance contradicted every suspicion he could possibly entertain, that she favoured the addresses of any man living; and had he remembered, he would not have dared to name the subject.

The time ran so swiftly while he was away, that it was beyond the dinner hour at Elmwood House when he returned. Heated, his dress and his hair disordered, he entered the dining-room just as the dessert was put upon the table. He was confounded at his own appearance, and at the falsehoods he should be obliged to fabricate in his excuse: there was yet that which engaged his attention, beyond any circumstance relating to himself—the features of Lord Elmwood—of which his daughter's, whom he had just beheld, had the most striking resemblance; though hers were softened by sorrow, while his were made austere by the selfsame cause.

"Where have you been?" said his uncle, with a frown.

"A chase, my lord—I beg your pardon—but a pack of dogs I unexpectedly met." For in the hackneyed art of lying without injury to any one, Rushbrook, to his shame, was proficient.

His excuses were received, and the subject ceased.

During his absence that day, Lord Elmwood had called Sandford apart, and said to him, that as the malevolence which he once observed between him and Rushbrook had, he perceived, subsided, he advised him, if he was a well-wisher to the young man, to sound his heart, and counsel him not to act against the will of his nearest relation and friend. "I myself am too hasty," continued Lord Elmwood; "and, unhappily, too much determined upon what I have once (though, perhaps, rashly) said, to speak upon a topic where it is probable I shall meet with opposition. You, Sandford, can reason with moderation. For after all that I have done for my nephew, it would be a pity to forsake him at last; and yet, that is but too likely, if he should provoke me to it."

"Sir," replied Sandford, "I will speak to him."

"Yet," added Lord Elmwood, sternly, "do not urge what you say for my sake, but for his own: I can part from him with ease, but he may then repent; and, you know, repentance always comes too late with me."

"My Lord, I will exert all the efforts in my power for his welfare. But what is the subject on which he has refused to comply with your desires?"

"Matrimony—have not I told you?"

"Not a word."

"I wish him to marry, that I may then conclude the deeds in respect to my estate; and the only child of Sir William Winterton (a rich heiress) was the wife I meant to propose; but from his indifference to all I have said on the occasion, I have not yet mentioned her name to him—you may."

"I will, my Lord, and use all my persuasion to engage his obedience; and you shall have, at least, a faithful account of what he says."

Sandford the next morning sought an opportunity of being alone with Rushbrook. He then plainly repeated to him what Lord Elmwood had said, and saw him listen to it all, and heard him answer to it all with the most tranquil resolution, "That he would do any thing to preserve the friendship and patronage of his uncle—but marry."

"What can be your reason?" asked Sandford, though he guessed.

"A reason I cannot give to Lord Elmwood."

"Then do not give it to me, for I have promised to tell him every thing you shall say to me."

"And every thing I *have* said?" asked Rushbrook, hastily.

"As to what you have said, I don't know whether it has made impression enough on my memory to enable me to repeat it."

"I am glad it has not."

"And my answer to your uncle is to be, simply, that you will not obey him."

"I should hope, Mr. Sandford, that you will express it in better terms."

"Tell me the terms, and I will be exact."

Rushbrook struck his forehead, and walked about the room.

"Am I to give him any reason for your disobeying him?"

"I tell you again that I dare not name the cause."

"Then why do you submit to a power you are ashamed to own?"

"I am not ashamed—I glory in it. Are you ashamed of your esteem for Lady Matilda?"

"Oh! if she is the cause of your disobedience, be assured I shall not mention it; for I am forbid to name her."

"And, surely, as that is the case, I need not fear to speak plainly to you. I love Lady Matilda; or, perhaps, unacquainted with love, what I feel may be only pity; and if so, pity is the most pleasing passion that ever possessed a human heart, and I would not change it for all her father's estates."

"Pity, then, gives rise to very different sensations; for I pity you, and that sensation I would gladly exchange for approbation."

"If you really feel compassion for me, and I believe you do, contrive some means by your answers to Lord Elmwood to pacify him, without involving me in ruin. Hint at my affections being engaged, but not to whom; and add, that I have given my word, if he will allow me a short time, a year or two only, I will, during that period, try to disengage them, and use all my power to render myself worthy of the union for which he designs me."

"And this is not only your solemn promise, but your fixed determination."

"Nay, why will you search my heart to the bottom, when the surface ought to content you?"

"If you cannot resolve on what you have proposed, why do you ask this time of your uncle? For should he allow it you, your disobedience at the expiration will be less pardonable than it is now."

"Within a year, Mr. Sandford, who can tell what strange events may not occur to change all our prospects? Even my passion may decline."

"In that expectation, then, the failure of which yourself must answer for, I will repeat as much of this discourse as shall be proper."

Here Rushbrook communicated his having been to see Lady Matilda; for which Sandford reproved him, but in less rigorous terms than he generally used in his reproofs; and Rushbrook, by his entreaties, now gained the intelligence who the nobleman was who addressed Matilda, and on what views; but was restrained to patience by Sandford's arguments and threats.

Upon the subject of this marriage Sandford met his patron, without having determined exactly what to say, but rested on the temper in which he should find him.

At the commencement of the conversation he told him, "Rushbrook begged for time."

"I have given him time—have I not?" cried Lord Elmwood: "what can be the meaning of his thus trifling with me?"

Sandford replied, "My Lord, young men are frequently romantic in their notions of love, and think it impossible to have a sincere affection where their own inclinations do not first point out the choice."

"If he is in love," answered Lord Elmwood, "let him take the object, and leave my house and me for ever. Nor under this destiny can he have any claim to pity; for genuine love will make him happy in banishment, in poverty, or in sickness: it makes the poor man happy as the rich, the fool blest as the wise." The sincerity with which Lord Elmwood had loved was expressed, as he said this, more than in words.

"Your Lordship is talking," replied Sandford, "of the passion in its most refined and predominant sense, while I may possibly be speaking of a mere phantom that has led this young man astray."

"Whatever it be," returned Lord Elmwood, "let him and his friends weigh the case well, and act for the best—so shall I."

"His friends, my Lord! What friends, or what friend has he upon earth but you?"

"Then why will he not submit to my advice, or himself give me a proper reason why he cannot?"

"Because there may be friendship without familiarity; and so it is between him and you."

"That cannot be; for I have condescended to talk to him in the most familiar terms."

"To condescend, my Lord, is *not* to be familiar."

"Then come, sir, let us be on an equal footing through you. And now speak out *his* thoughts freely, and hear mine in return."

"Why, then, he begs a respite for a year or two."

"On what pretence?"

"To me, it was preference of a single life: but I suspect it is, what he imagines to be, love, and for some object whom he thinks your Lordship would disapprove."

"He has not, then, actually confessed this to you?"

"If he has, it was drawn from him by such means, that I am not warranted to say it in direct words."

"I have entered into no contract, no agreement on his account, with the friends of the lady I have pointed out," said Lord Elmwood: "nothing beyond implications have passed betwixt her family and myself at present; and if the person on whom he has fixed his affections should not be in a situation absolutely contrary to my wishes, I may, perhaps, confirm his choice."

That moment Sandford's courage prompted him to name Lady Matilda, but his discretion opposed. However, in the various changes of his countenance from the conflict, it was plain to discern that he wished to say more than he dared.

On which Lord Elmwood cried,—

"Speak on, Sandford; what are you afraid of?"

"Of you, my Lord."

He started.

Sandford went on: "I know no tie, no bond, no innocence, that is a protection when you feel resentment."

"You are right," he replied, significantly.

"Then how, my Lord, can you encourage me to *speak on*, when that which I perhaps should say might offend you to hear?"

"To what, and whither are you changing our subject?" cried Lord Elmwood. "But, sir, if you know my resentful and relentless temper, you surely know how to shun it."

"Not, and speak plainly."

"Then dissemble."

"No, I'll not do that; but I'll be silent."

"A new parade of submission. You are more tormenting to me than any one I have about me; constantly on the verge of disobeying my orders, that you may recede, and gain my goodwill by your forbearance. But know, Mr. Sandford, that I will not suffer this much longer. If you choose in every conversation we have together (though the most remote from such a topic) to think of my daughter, you must either banish your thoughts, or conceal them; nor by one sign, one item, remind me of her."

"Your daughter, did you call her? Can you call yourself her father?"

"I do, sir: but I was likewise the husband of her mother; and, as that husband, I solemnly swear——" He was proceeding with violence.

"Oh, my Lord," cried Sandford, interrupting him, with his hands clasped in the most fervent supplication—"oh, do not let me draw upon her one oath more of your eternal displeasure. I'll kneel to beg that you will drop the subject."

The inclination he made, with his knees bent towards the ground, stopped Lord Elmwood instantly. But though it broke in upon his words, it did not alter one angry look: his eyes darted, and his lips trembled with indignation.

Sandford, in order to appease him, bowed and offered to withdraw, hoping to be recalled. He wished in vain: Lord Elmwood's eyes followed him to the door, expressive of the joy he should receive from his absence.

CHAPTER LI.

THE companions and counsellors of Lord Margrave, who had so prudently advised gentle methods in the pursuit of his passion, while there was left any hope of their success, now, convinced there was none, as strenuously recommended open violence;—and sheltered under the consideration that their depredations were to be practised upon a defenceless woman, who had not one protector, except an old priest, the subject of their ridicule;—assured, likewise, from the influence of Lord Margrave's wealth, that all inferior consequences could be overborne, they saw no room for fears on any side; and what they wished to execute, they with care and skill premeditated.

When their scheme was mature for performance, three of his chosen companions, and three servants, trained in all the villanous exploits of their masters, set off for the habitation of poor Matilda, and arrived there about the twilight of the evening.

Near four hours after that time (just as the family were going to bed), they came up to the doors of the house, and, rapping violently, gave the alarm of fire, conjuring all the inhabitants to make their way out immediately, as they would save their lives.

The family consisted of few persons, all of whom ran instantly to the doors, and opened them; on which two men rushed in, and, with the plea of saving Lady Matilda from the pretended flames, caught her in their arms, and carried her off; while all the deceived people of the house, running eagerly to save themselves, paid no regard to her; till looking for the cause for which they had been terrified, they perceived the stratagem, and the fatal consequences.

Amidst the complaints, the sorrow, and the affright of the people of the farm, Miss Woodley's sensations wanted a name.

Terror and anguish give but a faint description of what she suffered : something like the approach of death stole over her senses, and she sat like one petrified with horror. She had no doubt who was the perpetrator of this wickedness ; but how was she to follow—how effect a rescue ?

The circumstances of this event, as soon as the people had time to call up their recollection, were sent to a neighbouring magistrate ; but little could be hoped from that. Who was to swear to the robber ? Who undertake to find him out ? Miss Woodley thought of Rushbrook—of Sandford—of Lord Elmwood ; but what could she hope from the want of power in the two former ?—what from the latter, for the want of will ? Now stupified, and now distracted, she walked about the house incessantly, begging for instructions how to act, or how to forget her misery.

A tenant of Lord Elmwood's, who occupied a little farm near to that where Lady Matilda lived, and who was well acquainted with the whole history of her and her mother's misfortunes, was returning from a neighbouring fair just as this inhuman plan was put in execution. He heard the cries of a woman in distress, and followed the sound, till he arrived at a chaise in waiting, and saw Matilda placed in it, by the side of two men, who presented pistols to him as he offered to approach and expostulate.

The farmer, though uncertain who this female was, yet went to the house she had been taken from (as the nearest) with the tale of what he had seen ; and there being informed it was Lady Matilda whom he had beheld, this intelligence, joined to the powerful effect her screams had on him, made him resolve to take horse immediately, and, with some friends, follow the carriage till they should trace the place to which she was conveyed.

The anxiety, the firmness discovered in determining upon this undertaking, somewhat alleviated the agony Miss Woodley endured ; and she began to hope timely assistance might yet be given to her beloved charge.

The man set out, meaning at all events to attempt her release ; but before he had proceeded far, the few friends that accompanied him began to reflect on the improbability of their success, against a nobleman, surrounded by servants, with other attendants likewise, and, perhaps, even countenanced by the father

of the lady, whom they presumed to take from him : or if not, while Lord Elmwood beheld the offence with indifference, that indifference gave it a sanction they might in vain oppose. These cool reflections tending to their safety, had their weight with the companions of the farmer : they all rode back, rejoicing at their second thoughts, and left him to pursue his journey, and prove his valour by himself.

CHAPTER LII.

It was not with Sandford as it had lately been with Rushbrook, under the displeasure of Lord Elmwood : to the latter he behaved, as soon as their dissension was past, as if it had never happened. But to Sandford it was otherwise : the resentment which he had repressed at the time of the offence lurked in his heart, and dwelt upon his mind for several days ; during which he carefully avoided exchanging a word with him, and gave other demonstrations of being still in enmity.

Sandford, though experienced in the cruelty and ingratitude of the world, yet could not, without difficulty, brook this severity, this contumely, from a man for whose welfare, ever since his infancy, he had laboured ; and whose happiness was more dear to him, in spite of all his faults, than that of any other person. Even Lady Matilda was not so dear to Sandford as her father ; and he loved her more that she was Lord Elmwood's child, than for any other cause.

Sometimes the old priest, incensed beyond bearing, was on the point of saying to his patron, "How, in my age, dare you thus treat the man whom, in his youth, you respected and revered ?"

Sometimes, instead of anger, he felt the tear, he was ashamed to own, steal to his eye, and even fall down his cheek. Sometimes he left the room half determined to leave the house : but these were all half determinations, for he knew him with whom he had to deal too well not to know that he might be provoked

into yet greater anger; and that should he once rashly quit his house, the doors, most probably, would be shut against him for ever after.

In this humiliating state (for even the domestics could not but observe their Lord's displeasure) Sandford passed three days, and was beginning the fourth, when sitting with Lord Elmwood and Rushbrook just after breakfast, a servant entered, saying, as he opened the door, to somebody who followed, "You must wait till you have my Lord's permission."

This attracted their eyes to the door, and a man meanly dressed walked in, following close to the servant.

The latter turned, and seemed again to desire the person to retire, but in vain: he rushed forward, regardless of his opposer, and, in great agitation, said,—

"My Lord, if you please, I have business with you, provided you will choose to be alone."

Lord Elmwood, struck with the intruder's earnestness, bade the servant leave the room, and then said to the stranger,—

"You may speak before these gentlemen."

The man instantly turned pale, and trembled—then, to prolong the time before he spoke, went to the door to see if it was shut—returned—yet, still trembling, seemed unwilling to say his errand.

"What have you done," cried Lord Elmwood, "that you are in this terror? What have you done, man?"

"Nothing, my Lord," replied he; "but I am afraid I am going to offend you."

"Well, no matter," he answered carelessly; "only go on, and let me know your business."

The man's distress increased; and he replied, in a voice of grief and affright, "Your child, my Lord—"

Rushbrook and Sandford started; and, looking at Lord Elmwood, saw him turn white as death. In a tremulous voice he instantly cried,—

"What of her?" and rose from his seat.

Encouraged by the question, and the agitation of him who asked it, the poor man gave way to his feelings, and answered with every sign of sorrow,—

"I saw her, my Lord, taken away by force: two ruffians.

seized and carried her away, while she screamed in vain to me for help, and looked like one in distraction."

"Man, what do you mean?" cried the Earl.

"Lord Margrave," replied the stranger, "we have no doubt, has formed this plot: he has for some time past beset the house where she lived; and, when his visits were refused, he threatened this. Besides, one of his servants attended the carriage: I saw, and knew him."

Lord Elmwood listened to the last part of this account with seeming composure: then, turning hastily to Rushbrook, he said,—

"Where are my pistols, Harry?"

Sandford forgot, at this instant, all the anger that had passed between him and the Earl: he rushed towards him, and grasping his hand, cried, "Will you then prove yourself a father?"

Lord Elmwood only answered, "Yes," and left the room.

Rushbrook followed, and begged, with all the earnestness he felt, to be permitted to accompany his uncle:—while Sandford shook hands with the farmer a thousand times; and he, in his turn, rejoiced, as if he had already seen Lady Matilda restored to liberty.

Rushbrook in vain entreated Lord Elmwood: he laid his commands upon him not to go a step from the castle; while the agitation of his own mind was too great to observe the rigour of this sentence on his nephew.

During hasty preparations for the Earl's departure, Sandford received from Miss Woodley the sad intelligence of what had occurred; but he returned an answer to recompense her for all she had suffered on the sad occasion.

Within a short hour Lord Elmwood set off, accompanied by his guide, the farmer, and other attendants, furnished with every requisite to ascertain the success of their enterprise; while poor Matilda little thought of a deliverer nigh, much less that her deliverer should prove her father.

CHAPTER LIII.

LORD MARGRAVE, black as this incident of his life must make him appear to the reader, still nursed in his conscience a reserve of specious virtue, to keep him in peace with himself. It was his design to plead, to argue, to implore, nay even to threaten, long before he put his threats in force;—and with this and the following reflection, he reconciled—as most bad men can—what he had done, not only to the laws of humanity, but to the laws of honour:—

“I have stolen a woman certainly,” said he to himself, “but I will make her happier than she was in that humble state from which I have taken her. I will even,” said he, “now that she is in my power, win her affections; and when, in fondness, hereafter, she hangs upon me, how will she thank me for this little trial, through which I shall have conducted her to happiness!”

Thus did he hush his remorse, while he waited impatiently at home, in expectation of his prize.

Half expiring with her sufferings, of body as well as of mind, about twelve o'clock the next night, after she was borne away, Matilda arrived,—and felt her spirits revive by the superior sufferings that awaited her;—for her increasing terrors roused her from the deathlike weakness brought on by extreme fatigue.

Lord Margrave's house, to which he had gone previous to this occasion, was situated in the lonely part of a well known forest, not more than twenty miles distant from London. This was an estate he rarely visited; and as he had but few servants here, it was a spot which he supposed would be less the object of suspicion in the present case than any other of his seats. To this, then, Lady Matilda was conveyed—a superb apartment allotted her—and one of his confidential females placed to attend upon her person, with all respect and assurances of safety.

Matilda looked in this woman's face, and seeing she bore the features of her sex, while her own knowledge reached none of

those worthless characters of which this creature was a specimen, she imagined that none of those could look as she did, and therefore found consolation in her seeming tenderness. She was even prevailed upon (by her promises to sit by her side and watch) to throw herself on a bed, and suffer sleep for a few minutes—for sleep to her was suffering; her fears giving birth to dreams terrifying as her waking thoughts.

More wearied than refreshed with her sleep, she rose at break of day; and, refusing to admit of the change of an article in her dress, she persisted to wear the torn, disordered habili-ment in which she had been dragged away; nor would she taste a morsel of all the delicacies that were prepared for her.

Her attendant for some time observed the most reverential awe; but finding this humility had not the effect of gaining compliance with her advice, she varied her manners, and began by less submissive means to attempt an influence. She said her orders were to be obedient, while she herself was obeyed—at least in circumstances so material as the lady's health, of which she had the charge as a physician, and expected equal compliance from her patient. Food and fresh apparel she prescribed as the only means to prevent death; and even threatened her invalid with something worse, a visit from Lord Margrave, if she continued obstinate.

Now loathing her for the deception she had practised, more than had she received her thus at first, Matilda hid her eyes from the sight of her; and, when she was obliged to look, she shuddered.

This female at length thought it her duty to wait upon her worthy employer, and inform him the young lady in her trust would certainly die, unless there were means employed to oblige her to take some nourishment.

Lord Margrave, glad of an opportunity that might apologise for his intrusion upon Lady Matilda, went with eagerness to her apartment; and, throwing himself at her feet, conjured her, if she would save his life, as well her own, to submit to be consoled.

The extreme aversion, the horror which his presence inspired, caused Matilda for a moment to forget all her want of power, her want of health, her weakness; and rising from the place where she sat, she cried, with her voice elevated,—

"Leave me, my Lord, or I'll die in spite of all your care. I'll instantly expire with grief, if you do not leave me."

Accustomed to the tears and reproaches of the sex, though not of those like her, he treated with indifference these menaces of anger, and, seizing her hand, carried it to his lips.

Enraged, and overwhelmed with terror at the affront, she exclaimed (forgetting every other friend she had), "Oh, my dear Miss Woodley, why are you not here to protect me?"

"Nay," returned Lord Margrave, stifling a propensity to laugh, "I should think the old priest would be as good a champion as the lady."

The remembrance of Sandford, with all his kindness, now rushed so forcibly on Matilda's mind, that she shed tears, from the certainty how much he felt, and would continue to feel, for her situation. Once she thought on Rushbrook, and thought even *he* would be sorry for her. Of her father she did not think—she dared not: one single moment, indeed, that thought had intruded; but she hurried it away—it was too bitter.

It was now again quite night, and near to that hour when she came first to the house. Lord Margrave, though at some distance from her, remained still in her apartment, while her female companion had stolen away. His insensibility to her lamentations—the agitated looks he sometimes cast upon her—her weak and defenceless state—all conspired to fill her mind with increasing horror.

He saw her apprehensions in her distracted face, dishevelled hair, and the whole of her forlorn appearance; yet, in spite of his former resolutions, he did not resist the wish of fulfilling all her dreadful expectations.

He once again approached her, and again was going to seize her hand; when the report of a pistol, and a confused noise of persons assembling towards the door of the apartment, caused him to desist.

He started—but looked more surprised than alarmed—*her* alarm was augmented; for she supposed this tumult was some experiment to intimidate her into submission. She wrung her hands, and lifted up her eyes to Heaven, in the last agony of despair, when one of Lord Margrave's servants entered hastily, and announced—

"Lord Elmwood!"

That moment her father entered—and, with all the unrestrained fondness of a parent, folded her in his arms.

Her extreme, her excess of joy on such a meeting, and from such anguish rescued, was, in part, repressed by his awful presence. The apprehensions to which she had been accustomed kept her timid and doubtful : she feared to speak, or clasp him in return for his embrace, but, falling on her knees, clung round his legs, and bathed his feet with her tears. These were the happiest moments that she had ever known—perhaps the happiest *he* had ever known.

Lord Margrave, on whom Lord Elmwood had not even cast a look, now left the room ; but, as he quitted it, called out,—

“ My Lord Elmwood, if you have any demands on me——”

The Earl interrupted him : “ Would you make me an executioner ? The law shall be your only antagonist.”

Matilda, quite exhausted, yet upheld by the sudden transport she had felt, was led by her father out of this wretched dwelling—more despicable than the hovel of the veriest beggar.

CHAPTER LIV.

OVERCOME with the want of rest for two nights, through her distracting fears, and all those fears now hushed, Matilda soon after she was placed in the carriage with Lord Elmwood, dropped fast asleep ; and thus, insensibly surprised, she leaned her head against her father in the sweetest slumber that imagination can conceive.

When she awoke, instead of the usual melancholy scene before her view, she beheld her father ; and heard the voice of the once dreaded Lord Elmwood tenderly saying,—

“ We will go no further to-night : the fatigue is too much for her. Order beds here directly, and some proper person to sit up and attend her.”

She could only turn to him with a look of love and duty : her lips could not utter a sentence.

In the morning she found her father by the side of her bed. He enquired "if she was in health sufficient to pursue her journey, or if she would remain at the inn where she was."

"I am able to go with you," she answered instantly.

"Nay," replied he, "perhaps you ought to stay here till you are perfectly recovered."

"I *am* recovered," said she, "and ready to go with you," fearful that he meant to separate from her, as he had ever done.

He perceived her fears, and replied, "Nay, if you stay, I shall do the same—and, when I go, shall take you with me to my house."

"To Elmwood House?" she asked eagerly.

"No, to my house in town, where I intend to be all the winter, and where you shall still continue under my care."

She turned her face on the pillow to conceal tears of joy, but her sobs revealed them.

"Come," said he, "this kiss is a token you have nothing to dread. I shall send for Miss Woodley, too, immediately," continued he.

"Oh, I shall be overjoyed to see her, my Lord—and to see Mr. Sandford—and even Mr. Rushbrook."

"Do you know *him*?" said Lord Elmwood.

"I have seen him two or three times."

The Earl, hoping the air might be a means of re-establishing her health and spirits, now left the room, and ordered his carriage to be prepared, while she arose, attended by one of his female servants, for whom he had sent to town to bring such changes of apparel as were requisite.

When Matilda was ready to join her father in the next room, she felt a tremour seize her, that made it almost impossible to appear before him. No other circumstance now impending to agitate her heart, she felt more forcibly its embarrassment at meeting, on terms of easy intercourse, him of whom she had never been used to think but with that distant reverence and fear which his severity had excited; and she knew not how she should dare to speak to or look on him with that freedom which her affection warranted.

After many efforts to conquer these nice and refined sensations, but to no purpose, she at last went to his apartment. He was reading; but as she entered, he put out his hand and

drew her to him. Her tears wholly overcame her. He could have intermingled his : but assuming a grave countenance, he entreated her to desist from exhausting her spirits ; and, after a few powerful struggles, she obeyed.

Before the morning was over, she experienced the extreme joy of sitting by her father's side as they drove to town, and of receiving, during his conversation, a thousand intimations of his love, and tokens of her lasting happiness.

It was now the middle of November ; and yet, as Matilda passed along, never to her did the sun shine so bright as upon this morning—never did her imagination comprehend that the human heart could feel happiness true and genuine as hers.

On arriving at the house, there was no abatement of her felicity : all was respect and duty on the part of the domestics—all paternal care on the part of Lord Elmwood ; and she would have been at that summit of her wishes which annihilates hope, but that the prospect of seeing Miss Woodley and Mr. Sandford still kept this passion in existence.

CHAPTER LV.

RUSHBROOK was detained at Elmwood House during all this time, more by the precautions, nay prayers of Sandford, than the commands of Lord Elmwood. He had, but for Sandford, followed his uncle, and exposed himself to his anger, sooner than have endured the most piercing inquietude which he was doomed to suffer till the news arrived of Lady Matilda's safety. He indeed had little else to fear from the known firm, courageous character of her father, and the expedition with which he undertook his journey ; but lovers' fears are like those of women, obstinate ; and no argument could persuade either him or Miss Woodley (who had now ventured to come to Elmwood House) but that Matilda's peace of mind might be for ever destroyed before she was rescued from her danger.

The summons from Lord Elmwood for their coming to town was received by each of this party with delight ; but the impa-

tience to obey it was in Rushbrook so violent, it was painful to himself, and extremely troublesome to Sandford, who wished, from his regard to Lady Matilda, rather to delay than hurry their journey.

"You are to blame," said he to him and Miss Woodley, "to wish, by your arrival, to divide with Lord Elmwood that tender bond which ties the good, who confer obligations, to the object of their benevolence. At present there is no one with him to share in the care and protection of his daughter, and he is under the necessity of discharging that duty himself: this habit may become so powerful, that he *cannot* throw it off, even if his former resolutions should urge him to it. While we remain here, therefore, Lady Matilda is safe with her father; but it would not surprise me, if on our arrival (especially if we are precipitate) he should place her again with Miss Woodley at a distance."

To this forcible conjecture they submitted for a few days, and then most gladly set out for town.

On their arrival, they were met, even at the street door, by Lady Matilda; and, with an expression of joy they did not suppose her features could have worn, she embraced Miss Woodley! hung upon Sandford!—and to Mr. Rushbrook, who from conscientious love only bowed at an humble distance, she held out her hand with every look and gesture of the tenderest esteem.

When Lord Elmwood joined them, he welcomed them all sincerely; but Sandford more than the rest, with whom he had not spoken for many days before he left the country, for his allusion to the wretched situation of his daughter—and Sandford (with his fellow-travellers) now saw him treat that daughter with an easy, a natural fondness, as if she had lived with him from her infancy. He appeared, however, at times, under the apprehension that the propensity of man to jealousy might give Rushbrook a pang at this dangerous rival in his love and fortune. For though Lord Elmwood remembered well the hazard he had once ventured to befriend Matilda, yet the present unlimited reconciliation was something so unlooked for, it might be a trial too much for his generosity. Slight as was this suspicion, it did Rushbrook injustice. He loved Lady Matilda too sincerely, he loved her father's happiness and her mother's memory too faithfully, not to be rejoiced at all he witnessed; nor could the secret

hope that whispered him, "their blessings might one day be mutual," increase the pleasure he found in beholding Matilda happy.

Unexpected affairs, in which Lord Elmwood had been for some time engaged, had diverted his attention for a while from the marriage of his nephew; nor did he at this time find his disposition sufficiently severe, to exact from the young man a compliance with his wishes, at so cruel an alternative as that of being for ever discarded. He felt his mind, by the late incident, too much softened for such harshness; he yet wished for the alliance he had proposed; for he was more consistent in his character than to suffer the tenderness his daughter's peril had awakened to derange those plans which he had long projected. Never, even now, for a moment did he indulge—for perhaps it would have been an indulgence—the design of replacing her exactly in the rights of her birth to the disappointment of all his nephew's expectations.

Yet, milder at this crisis in his temper than he had been for years before, and knowing he could be no longer irritated upon the subject of neglect to his child, he at length once more resolved to trust himself in a conference with Rushbrook on the plan of his marriage; meaning at the same time to mention Matilda as an opponent from whom he had nothing to fear. But, for some time before Rushbrook was called to this private audience, he had, by his unwearied attention, endeavoured to impress upon Matilda's mind the softest sentiments in his favour. He succeeded—but not so fully as he wished. She loved him as her friend, her cousin, her foster-brother, but not as a lover. The idea of love never once came to her thoughts; and she would sport with Rushbrook like the most harmless infant, while he, all impassioned, could with difficulty resist disclosing to her what she made him suffer.

At the meeting between him and Lord Elmwood, to which he was called for his final answer on that subject, which had once nearly proved so fatal to him; after a thousand fears, much confusion and embarrassment, he at length frankly confessed his "heart was engaged, and had been so long before his uncle offered to direct his choice."

Lord Elmwood, as he had done formerly, desired to know "on whom he had placed his affections."

"I dare not tell you, my Lord," returned he; "but Mr. Sandford can witness their sincerity, and how long they have been fixed."

"Fixed!" cried the Earl.

"Immovably fixed, my Lord; and yet the object is as unconscious of my love at this moment as you yourself have been; and I swear ever shall be so, without your permission."

"Name the object," said Lord Elmwood, anxiously.

"My Lord, I dare not. The last time I named her to you, you threatened to abandon me for my arrogance."

Lord Elmwood started—"My daughter!—Would you marry her?"

"But with your approbation, my Lord; and that——"

Before he could proceed a word further, his uncle left the room hastily; and left Rushbrook all terror for his approaching fate.

Lord Elmwood went immediately into the apartment where Sandford, Miss Woodley, and Matilda were sitting, and cried with an angry voice, and with his countenance disordered,—

"Rushbrook has offended me beyond forgiveness. Go, Sandford, to the library, where he is, and tell him this instant to quit my house, and never dare to return."

Miss Woodley lifted up her hands and sighed.

Sandford rose slowly from his seat to execute the office;—

While Lady Matilda, who was arranging her music books upon the instrument, stopped from her employment suddenly, and held her handkerchief to her eyes.

A general silence ensued, till Lord Elmwood, resuming his angry tone, cried; "Did you hear me, Mr. Sandford?"

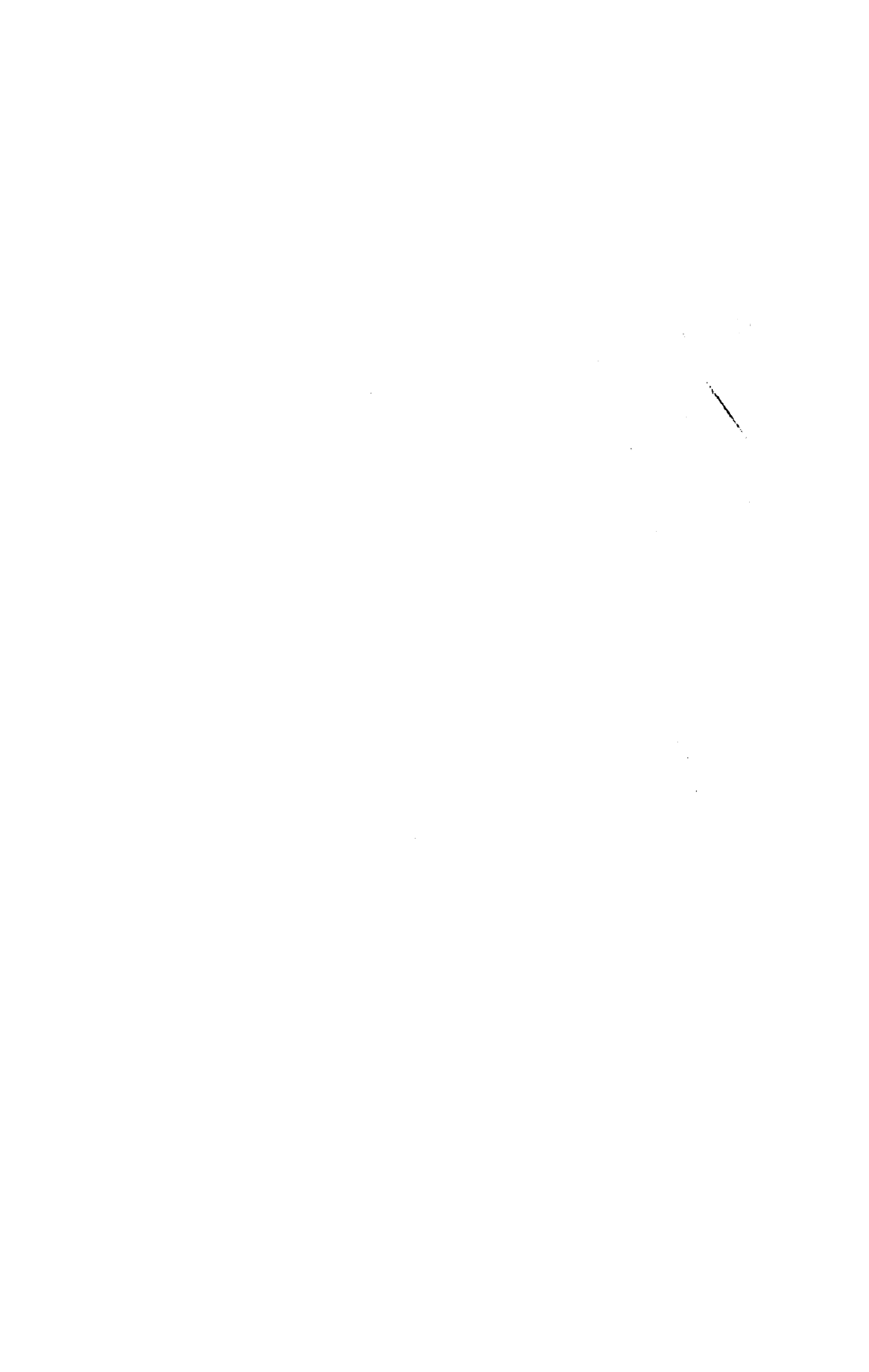
Sandford, now, without a word in reply, made for the door; but there Matilda impeded him; and, throwing her arms about his neck, cried;—

"Dear Mr. Sandford, do not."

"How!" exclaimed her father.

She saw the impending frown, and, rushing towards him, took his hand fearfully, and knelt at his feet. "Mr. Rushbrook is my relation," she cried in a pathetic voice; "my companion, my friend: before you loved me he was anxious for my happiness, and often visited me to lament with and console me. I

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